

Chronicles of Creation

Merits

General Merits

Air of Menace (••)

Prerequisites: Intimidation ••

Effect: Your character has survived dozens of fights, and each one has taken its toll. He carries scars, features that have healed crookedly, and an attitude that unsettles others. The character gains +2 dice to rolls that use fear and menace to force compliance, such as with Intimidation rolls. Opponents less menacing than the character also think twice before provoking him. Opponents with Intimidation dots fewer than the character's must spend a point of Willpower to initiate combat against him.

Drawback: Though many people try to overcome their prejudices, appearance still drives many human opinions. In social maneuvers, the character's first impression is downgraded one step for people who do not know him, and even for those who do, he must overcome an additional Door.

Allies (• to •••••)

Effect: Allies help your character. They might be friends, employees, associates, or people your character has blackmailed. Each instance of this Merit represents one type of ally. This could be an organization, a society, a clique, or an individual. Examples include the police, a secret society, criminal organizations, unions, local politicians, or the academic community. Each purchase has its own rating. Your character might have Allies (Masons) ••, Allies (Carter Crime Family) •••, and Allies (Catholic Church) •.

Each dot represents a layer of influence in the group. One dot would constitute small favors and passing influence. Three could offer considerable influence, such as the police overlooking a misdemeanor charge. Five dots stretches the limits of the organization's influence, as its leaders put their own influence on the line for the character. This could include things such as massive insider trading or fouling up a felony investigation. No matter the request, it has to be something that organization could accomplish.

The Storyteller assigns a rating between one and five to any favor asked. A character can ask for favors that add up to her Allies rating without penalty in one chapter. If she extends her influence beyond that, her player must roll Manipulation + Persuasion + Allies, with a penalty equal to the favor's rating. If the roll is successful, the group does as requested. Failed or successful, the character loses a dot of Allies. This dot may return at the end of the chapter. On a dramatic failure, the organization resents her and seeks retribution. On an exceptional success, she doesn't lose the dot.

One additional favor a character can ask of her Allies is to block another character's Allies, Contacts, Mentor, Retainer, or Status (if she knows the character possesses the relevant Merit). The rating is equal to the Merit dots blocked. As before, no roll is necessary unless the target's Merit exceeds the character's Allies. If the block succeeds, the character cannot use the Merit during the same chapter.

Multiple Instances: Each instance of this Merit represents one type of ally. This could be an organization, a society, a clique, or an individual. Each purchase has its own rating. Your character might have Allies (Middle Class Anarchists) ••, Allies (Stolichnaya Crime Family) •••, and Allies (Methodist Church) •.

Alternate Identity (•, ••, or •••)

Effect: Your character has established an alternate identity. The level of this Merit determines the amount of scrutiny it holds up to. At one dot, the identity is superficial and unofficial. For example, your character uses an alias with a simple costume and adopts an accent. She hasn't established the necessary paperwork to even approach a bureaucratic background check, let alone pass one. At two dots, she's supported her identity with paperwork and identification. It's not liable to stand up to extensive research, but it'll turn away private investigators and internet hobbyists. At three dots, the identity can pass a thorough inspection. The identity has been deeply entrenched in relevant databases, with subtle flourishes and details to make it seem real, even to trained professionals.

Additionally, the Merit reflects time the character has spent honing her persona. At one or two dots, she gains +1 to all Subterfuge rolls to defend the identity. At three dots, she gains +2.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times, each time representing an additional identity.

Ambidextrous (•••)

Effect: Your character does not suffer the -2 penalty for using his off hand in combat or to perform other actions.

Available only at character creation.

Anonymity (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Cannot have Fame

Effect: Your character lives off the grid. This means purchases must be made with cash or falsified credit cards. She eschews identification. She avoids any official authoritative influence in her affairs. Any attempts to find her by paper trail suffer a -1 penalty per dot purchased in this Merit.

Drawback: Your character cannot purchase the Fame Merit. This also may limit Status purchases, if the character cannot provide sufficient identification for the roles she wishes to take.

Architect (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character must create things that last. She's particularly good at this; she pours her all into everything, every institution, every relationship she can. When taking an extended action to create something your character finds significant, you gain a number of additional dice equal to your Merit dots. You can divide these dice as you see fit across any number of rolls. Any roll benefiting from these dice gains the 8-again quality.

Notes: If your character's Burden is Abiding, also add her Merit dots to her unmodified dice pool for determining how many rolls she's allowed in her extended actions.

Area of Expertise (•)

Prerequisite: Resolve •• and one Skill Specialty

Effect: Your character is uncommonly specialized in one area. Choose a Specialty to assign to this Merit. Forgo the +1 bonus afforded by a Specialty, in exchange for a +2.

Automotive Genius (•)

Prerequisites: Crafts •••, Drive •, Science •

Effect: Your character knows how to fine-tune a vehicle to utter extremes. When determining how many modifications she can add to a vehicle, triple her Crafts dots instead of doubling them. So, a character with Crafts ••• could support 12 combined modifications on a vehicle instead of eight. Additionally, any relevant Crafts Specialties add one more potential modification to the total.

Barfly (••)

Prerequisite: Socialize ••

Effect: Your character is a natural in the bar environment, and can procure an open invitation wherever he wishes. Whereas most characters would require rolls to blend into social functions they don't belong in, he doesn't; he belongs. Rolls to identify him as an outsider suffer his Socialize as a penalty.

Closed Book (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Manipulation •••, Resolve •••

Effect: Your character is particularly tough to crack. When a character uses Social Maneuvering against her, add her dots in this Merit as additional Doors. In other Social actions to uncover her true feelings, motives, and position, add her Merit dots to any contested rolls for her.

At the Storyteller's discretion, this can apply to supernatural effects used against her. For example, it might allow her to resist a power that forces her to speak the truth, since she can manipulate the wording. However, it wouldn't affect someone looking at her aura, since she cannot manipulate her spiritual resonance.

Cohesive Unit (•, •• or •••)

Prerequisites: Presence •••+

Effect: Your character is a natural leader who brings out the best from those he works with. At one dot, team members add +2 dice to teamwork actions dedicated to helping the team. At two dots the team gains access to a pool of dice equal to the character's Presence each scene, which they can draw upon for actions where they work towards their established purpose. At three dots, all team members can reroll a failed result once per scene. In each case, the benefits last until depleted, or until the team reaches or deviates from its agreed goal or disbands. The character with this Merit can't access any of the benefits he encourages in others.

Drawback: The character's natural aura of command can cause confusion in groups where the character is not the recognized leader. If a group benefiting from the character's Cohesive Unit Merit receives orders from someone they are expected to follow, and those orders don't conform with the actions the group is already taking, they suffer a -1 penalty for a number of turns equal to the character's Presence while they work through the conflicting tasks.

Common Sense (•••)

Effect: Your character has an exceptionally sound and rational mind. With a moment's thought, she can weigh potential courses of action and outcomes.

Once per chapter as an instant action, you may ask the Storyteller one of the following questions about a task at hand or course of action. Roll Wits + Composure. If you succeed, the Storyteller must answer to the best of her ability. If you fail, you get no answer. With an exceptional success, you can ask an additional question.

- What is the worst choice?
- What do I stand to lose here?
- What's the safest choice?
- Am I chasing a worthless lead?

Contacts (• to •••••)

Effect: Contacts provide your character with information. Each dot in this Merit represents a sphere or organization with which the character can garner information. For example, a character with Contacts •• might have Bloggers, Drug Dealers, and Financial Speculators for connections. Contacts do not provide services, only information. This may be face-to-face, via email, by telephone, or even by séance in some strange instances.

Garnering information via Contacts requires a Manipulation + Social Skill roll, depending on the method the character uses, and the relationship between the characters. The Storyteller should give a bonus or penalty, dependent on how relevant the information is to that particular Contact, whether accessing the information is dangerous, and if the character has maintained good relations or done favors for the Contact. These modifiers should range from -3 to +3 in most cases. If successful, the Contact provides the information.

One use of a Contact is to dig dirt on another character. A Contact can find another character's Social Merits, and any relevant Conditions (Embarrassing Secret is a prime example.)

A character can have more than five Contacts, but the Merit's rating is limited to five, for the purposes of Allies blocking.

Crack Driver (•• or •••)

Prerequisite: Drive •••

Effect: Your character's an ace at the wheel, and nothing shakes his concentration. So long as he's not taking any actions other than driving (and keeping the car safe), add his Composure to any rolls to Drive. Any rolls to disable his vehicle suffer a penalty equal to his Composure as well. With the three-dot version, once per turn he may take a Drive action reflexively.

Danger Sense (••)

Effect: You gain a +2 modifier on reflexive Wits + Composure rolls for your character to detect an impending ambush.

Your character's reflexes are honed to the point where nothing's shocking.

Defender (•, •• or •••)

Prerequisites: None

Effect: Your character is filled with a burning fury when her friends or family are threatened. For each dot of this Merit, the character gains a Willpower point to spend on actions related to defending or protecting these loved ones. This also applies to actions taken preemptively to prevent clear threats to her charges, and to acts of retribution against an offender if her loved ones are hurt. These bonus Willpower points do not count towards the character's normal Willpower dots, and replenish each chapter.

Drawback: The danger of loving so deeply is the pain of loss that comes from failing. If someone the character loves is killed or otherwise permanently taken from her, she cannot regain Willpower unless she strives towards inflicting retribution on the guilty party. If she is prevented in doing so, she grieves and loses a point of Willpower per day until she reaches zero. At this point, she may begin the healing process and recover Willpower as normal again. Your character loses this Merit at that point.

Demolisher (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Strength ••• or Intelligence •••

Effect: Your character has an innate feel for the weak points in objects. When damaging an object, she ignores one point of the object's Durability per dot with this Merit.

Direction Sense (•)

Effect: Your character has an innate sense of direction, and is always aware of her location in space. She always knows which direction she faces, and never suffers penalties to navigate or find her way.

Double Jointed (••)

Prerequisite: Dexterity •••

Effect: Your character might have been a contortionist, or spent time practicing yoga. She can dislodge joints when need be. She automatically escapes from any mundane bonds without a roll. When grappled, subtract her Dexterity from any rolls to overpower her, as long as she's not taking any aggressive actions.

Eidetic Memory (••)

Effect: Your character recalls events and details with pinpoint accuracy. You do not have to make rolls for your character to remember past experiences. When making Intelligence + Composure (or relevant Skill) rolls to recall minute facts from swaths of information, take a +2 bonus.

Empath (••)

Prerequisites: Empathy ••

Effect: Your character has seen pain, and can identify it instantly. With a single Wits + Empathy roll, you can identify any mental Conditions from which a character suffers, and his Integrity. A character trying to hide this can contest with Manipulation + Subterfuge, but may roll no more dice than his Integrity or other relevant trait. If he does not have Integrity, you get an idea of his general, abstract state and internal conflicts. For example, a vampire has Humanity instead of Integrity. Your character might know that the vampire struggles with a terrible addiction, and feels inhuman, but wishes to maintain attachment to what made him feel like a person. Any character so discerned is always down one Door in any social maneuvering with your character.

After a successful roll, with meaningful, relevant interaction, your character can give the 8-again quality to a subject's breaking point rolls for the chapter.

If a character takes your character as a Support Network, that character may never roll fewer dice for a breaking point than your character has Empathy dots.

Encyclopedic Knowledge (••)

Effect: Choose a Skill. Due to an immersion in academia, pop culture, or a hobby obsession, your character has collected limitless factoids about the topic, even if she has no dots in the Skill.

You can make an Intelligence + Wits roll at any time your character is dealing with her area of interest. On a successful roll, the Storyteller must give a relevant fact or detail about the issue at hand. Your character knows this fact, but you must explain within the scope of your character's background why she knows it. For example, for Encyclopedic Knowledge: Medicine: "Do you remember that time on that show, when the doctor said it doesn't manifest before puberty?"

Eye for the Strange (••)

Prerequisite: Resolve ••, Occult •

Effect: While your character does not necessarily possess a breadth of knowledge about the supernatural, she knows the otherworldly when she sees it. By perusing evidence, she can determine whether something comes from natural or supernatural origins. Roll Intelligence + Composure. With a success, the Storyteller must tell you if the scene has a supernatural cause, and provide one piece of found information that confirms the answer. With an exceptional success, she must give you a bit of supernatural folklore that suggests what type of creature caused the problem. If the problem was mundane, an exceptional success gives an ongoing +2 to all rolls to investigate the event, due to her redoubled certainty in its natural causation.

Fame (• to •••)

Effect: Your character is recognized within a certain sphere, for a certain skill, or because of some past action or stroke of luck. This can mean favors and attention, it can also mean negative attention and scrutiny. When choosing the Merit, define what your character is known for. As a rule of thumb, one dot means local recognition, or reputation within a confined subculture. Two dots means regional recognition by a wide swath of people. Three dots means worldwide recognition to anyone that might have been exposed to the source of the fame. Each dot adds a die to any Social rolls among those who are impressed by your character's celebrity.

Drawback: Any rolls to find or identify the character enjoy a +1 bonus per dot of the Merit. If the character has Alternate Identity, she can mitigate this drawback. A character with Fame cannot have the Anonymity Merit.

Fast Reflexes (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Wits ••• or Dexterity •••

Effect: +1 Initiative per dot Your character's reflexes impress and astound; she's always fast to react.

Fast-Talking (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Manipulation •••, Subterfuge ••

Your character talks circles around listeners. He speaks a mile a minute, and often leaves his targets reeling, but nodding in agreement.

Always Be Closing (•): With the right leading phrases, your character can direct a mark to say what he wants, when he wants. This trips the mark into vulnerable positions. When a mark contests or resists your character's Social interactions, apply a -1 to their Resolve or Composure.

Jargon (••): Your character confuses his mark using complex terminology. You may apply one relevant Specialty to any Social roll you make, even if the Specialty isn't tied to the Skill in use.

Devil's Advocacy (•••): Your character often poses arguments he doesn't agree with, in order to challenge a mark's position and keep him from advancing the discussion. You can reroll one failed Subterfuge roll per scene.

Salting (••••): Your character can position himself so a mark pursues a non-issue or something unimportant to him. When your character opens a Door using conversation (Persuasion, Subterfuge, Empathy, etc.) you may spend a Willpower point to immediately open another Door.

The Nigerian Scam (•••••): Your character can take advantage of his mark's greed and zeal. When the mark does particularly well, it's because your character was there to set him up, and to subsequently tear him down. If a target regains Willpower from his Vice while your character is present, you may immediately roll Manipulation + Subterfuge to open a Door, regardless of the interval or impression level.

Fixer (••)

Prerequisite: Contacts ••, Wits •••

Effect: Your character is people that knows people. She can not only get in touch with the right people to do a job, but she can get them at the best possible prices. When hiring a service, reduce the Availability score of the service by one dot.

Fleet of Foot (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Athletics ••

Effect: Your character is remarkably quick, and runs far faster than his frame suggests. He gains +1 Speed per dot, and anyone pursuing him suffers a -1 per dot to any foot chase rolls.

Fragmented Soul (••)

Prerequisite: Occult •••, a related specialty

Effect: Your character has learned to split their spirit in a way, allowing their pattern to hold a larger number of Pacts than is normally possible. Every applicable specialty purchased towards improving the number of Pacts they can be in provides 2 additional potential Pacts, rather than 1; this works retroactively.

Giant (•••)

Effect: Your character is massive. She's well over six feet tall, and crowds part when she approaches. She's Size 6, and gains +1 Health. Available only at character creation.

Drawback: Buying clothing is a nightmare. Fitting in small spaces is difficult at best.

Good Time Management (•)

Prerequisite: Academics •• or Science ••

Effect: Your character has vast experience managing complex tasks, keeping schedules, and meeting deadlines. When taking an extended action, halve the time required between rolls.

Krewe: Reduce the amount of Effort required for krewe actions by 1. Krewe actions always cost at least 1 Effort.

Greyhound (•)

Prerequisites: Athletics •••, Wits •••, Stamina •••

Effect: Your character works best when chasing or being chased; the hunt is in his blood. When in a chase (see p. 84), you receive the effects of an exceptional success on three successes instead of five.

Hardy (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Stamina •••

Effect: Your character's body goes further than it rightfully should. Add the dots in this Merit to any rolls to resist disease, poison, deprivation, unconsciousness, or suffocation.

Hobbyist Clique (••)

Prerequisite: Membership in a clique. All members must possess this Merit, and the chosen Skill at ••+

Effect: Your character is part of a group of hobbyists that specialize in one area, represented by a Skill. It may be a book club, a coven, a political party, or any group brought together by a common interest. When the group's support is available, you benefit from the 9-again quality on rolls involving the group's chosen Skill. As well, the clique offers two additional dice on any extended actions involving that Skill.

Drawback: This Merit requires upkeep. You must attend at least monthly, informal meetings to maintain the benefits of Hobbyist Clique.

Holistic Awareness (•)

Effect: Your character is skilled at non-traditional healing methods. While scientific minds might scoff, he can provide basic medical care with natural means. He knows what herbs can stem an infection, and what minerals will stave off a minor sickness. Unless your patient suffers wound penalties from lethal or aggravated wounds, you do not need traditional medical equipment to stabilize and treat injuries. With access to woodlands, a greenhouse, or other source of diverse flora, a Wits + Survival roll allows your character to gather all necessary supplies.

Indomitable (••)

Prerequisite: Resolve •••

Effect: Your character possesses an iron will. The powers of the supernatural have little bearing on her behavior. She can stand up to a vampire's mind control, a witch's charms, or a ghost's gifts of fright. Any time a supernatural creature uses a power to influence your character's thoughts or emotions, add two dice to the dice pool to contest it. If the roll is resisted, instead subtract two dice from the monster's dice pool. Note that this only affects mental influence and manipulation from a supernatural origin. A vampire with a remarkable Manipulation + Persuasion score is just as likely to convince your character to do something using mundane tricks.

Inspiring (•••)

Prerequisite: Presence •••

Effect: Your character's passion inspires those around her to greatness. With a few words, she can redouble a group's confidence or move them to action.

Make a Presence + Expression roll. A small group of listeners levies a -1 penalty, a small crowd a -2, and a large crowd a -3. Listeners gain the Inspired Condition. The character may not use this Merit on herself.

Interdisciplinary Specialty (•)

Prerequisite: Skill at ••• or higher with a Specialty

Effect: Choose a Specialty that your character possesses when you purchase this Merit. You can apply the +1 from that Specialty on any Skill with at least one dot, provided it's justifiable within the scope of the fiction. For example, a doctor with a Medicine Specialty in Anatomy may be able to use it when targeting a specific body part with Weaponry, but could not with a general strike.

Investigative Aide (•)

Prerequisites: Chosen Skill at •••+

Effect: Your character has one particular knack that can contribute amazingly to an investigation. Choose a Skill when purchasing this Merit; when making rolls to Uncover Clues, she achieves exceptional success on three successes instead of five. As well, Clues that come from her use of that Skill start with one additional element.

You may purchase this Merit multiple times, to enhance different Skills.

Iron Stamina (• to •••)

Prerequisites: Stamina ••• or Resolve •••

Effect: Each dot eliminates a negative modifier (on a one-for-one basis) when resisting the effects of fatigue or injury. For example: A character with Iron Stamina •• is able to ignore up to a -2 modifier brought on by fatigue. The Merit also counteracts the effects of wound penalties. So, if all of your character's Health boxes are filled (which normally imposes a -3 penalty to his actions) and he has Iron Stamina •, those penalties are reduced to -2. This Merit cannot be used to gain positive modifiers for actions, only to cancel out negative ones.

Iron Will (••)

Prerequisite: Resolve ••••

Effect: Your character's resolve is unwavering. When spending Willpower to contest or resist in a Social interaction, you may substitute your character's Resolve for the usual Willpower bonus. If the roll is contested, roll with 8-again.

Language (•)

Effect: Your character is skilled with an additional language, beyond her native tongue. Choose a language each time you buy this Merit. Your character can speak, read, and write in that language.

Library (• to •••)

Effect: Your character has access to a plethora of information about a given topic. When purchasing this Merit, choose a Mental Skill. The Library covers that purview. On any extended roll involving the Skill in question, add the dots in this Merit.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times, to reflect different Skills. Additionally, its benefits can be shared by various characters, with permission.

Library, Advanced (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Library •••, Safe Place (special)

Effect: Your character not only possesses a massive, credible library, but she also hoards thorough information about highly secretive supernatural topics. For each dot in this Merit, choose a topic. This could be "vampires," "mages," or any other supernatural force in the Fallen World. When your character consults her library on one of those topics, take the Informed Condition relating to the topic. You can do this once per story, per topic.

Advanced Library has a special prerequisite; your character requires a Safe Place equal to its dot rating. As with Library, your characters can share a library location (and the players split the cost in dots).

Lucid Dreamer (••)

Prerequisites: Non-changeling, Resolve •••

Effect: Whether because of a natural talent or mental training and practice, your character can roll to enter the Gate of Ivory when he sleeps, as a changeling does (p. 215). He can't engage in oneiromancy, but if successful, he knows he's dreaming and can physically wake voluntarily as the Lost do.

Manic States (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: This Merit must be tied to a Persistent Condition that's generally negative. You may take a relevant Condition when purchasing this Merit, or you may purchase this Merit when your character acquires a Persistent Condition in play.

Effect: Once per game session, reflexively spend a point of Willpower to bring about a manic state for the scene. Ignore the negative effects of the Persistent Condition for the scene. Additionally, take a pool of dice equal to your Merit dots, and divide them among any rolls during the scene as you see fit. Any roll where you used these dice gains 8-again.

However, after the scene, your character "drops." In addition to the Condition's effects returning, she loses 10-again on all rolls until she achieves a dramatic failure or an exceptional success on a later action.

Notes: If your character's Burden is Bereaved, this Merit grants exceptional success on three successes instead of five on any action benefiting from the additional dice.

Meditative Mind (•, ••, or ••••)

Effect: Your character's meditation is far more fulfilling than for other characters. With the one-dot version of this Merit, the character does not suffer environmental penalties to meditation, even from wound penalties.

With the two-dot version, when the character has successfully meditated, she gains a +3 bonus on any Resolve + Composure rolls during the same day, as she's steeled herself against the things in the world that would shake her foundation.

At the four-dot level, she only needs a single success to gain the benefits of meditation for the day, instead of the normal four.

Mentor (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit gives your character a teacher that provides advice and guidance. He acts on your character's behalf, often in the background, and sometimes without your character's knowledge. While Mentors can be highly competent, they almost always want something in return for their services. The dot rating determines the Mentor's capabilities, and to what extent he'll aid your character.

When establishing a Mentor, determine what the Mentor wants from your character. This should be personally important to him, and it should reflect on the dot rating chosen. A one-dot Mentor might be incapable of dealing with modern society, and want to live vicariously through your character. This might mean coming to him and telling stories of her exploits. A five-dot Mentor would want something astronomical, such as an oath to procure an ancient, cursed artifact that may or may not exist, in order to prevent a prophesized death.

Choose three Skills the Mentor possesses. You can substitute Resources for one of these Skills. Once per session, the character may ask her Mentor for a favor. The favor must involve one of those Skills, or be within the scope of his Resources. The Mentor commits to the favor (often asking for a commensurate favor in return), and if a roll is required, the Mentor is automatically considered to have successes equal to his dot rating. Alternately, you may ask the Storyteller to have the Mentor act on your character's behalf, without her character knowing or initiating the request.

Multilingual (•)

Effect: Your character has a strong affinity for language acquisition. Each time you purchase this Merit, choose two languages. Your character can speak conversationally in those languages. With an Intelligence + Academics roll, he may also read enough of the language to understand context. If you purchase the Language Merit for either of these languages, replace the Multilingual language. For example, if you have Multilingual (French, Italian), and purchase Language: Italian, you may choose to take Multilingual (French, Portuguese).

Mystery Cult Initiation (• to ••••)

Cults are far more common than people would like to admit. “Mystery cult” is the catch-all term for a phenomenon ranging from secret societies couched in fraternity houses, to scholarly cabals studying the magic of classical symbolism, to mystical suicide cults to the God-Machine.

Mystery Cult Initiation reflects membership in one of these esoteric groups. The dot rating dictates standing. One dot is an initiate, two a respected member, three a priest or organizer, four a decision-making leader, and five is a high priest or founder. If you wish your character to begin play in a cult, work with your Storyteller to develop the details.

Designing a Mystery Cult requires three things, at bare minimum. First is a Purpose. This is the defining reason the cult exists. Usually it’s tied in with the cult’s history and recent background. Second is a Relic. This is an item that grounds members’ faith. For example, a piece of the God-Machine, an ancient text bound in human flesh, or the mummified flesh of a saint. The last is a Doctrine. Every cult is defined by its rules and traditions.

In addition to standing, a Mystery Cult Initiation Merit offers benefits at each level of influence. Develop these as well. The following are guidelines; use them to craft your cults:

- A Skill Specialty or one-dot Merit, pertaining to the lessons taught to initiates.
- A one-dot Merit.
- A Skill dot, or a two-dot Merit (often a supernatural Merit).
- A three-dot Merit, often supernatural in origin.
- A three-dot Merit, or a major advantage not reflected in game traits.

Notes: Sin-Eaters who begin play as members of a krewe receive one dot of Mystery Cult Initiation for free. In addition, krewe celebrants automatically know all krewe Ceremonies whose dot rating is equal to or less than their Mystery Cult Initiation rating.

No member of a krewe can have more dots in Mystery Cult Initiation than the krewe’s Esotery rating.

Object Fetishism (• to ••••)

Effect: Your character places immense trust and confidence in an object, often assuming it has mystical or otherworldly significance. He believes he’s tied inexorably to the object. Choose a Skill Specialty when taking this Merit; that Specialty must be tied to your character’s relationship to the object.

Each chapter, your character gains an additional number of Willpower points equal to the Merit’s dots. If your character uses Willpower on a roll using that Specialty, any failure is considered a dramatic failure. However, exceptional successes occur on three successes instead of five.

Your character cannot regain or use Willpower when separated from the object.

Note: If the fetish object is destroyed or truly lost, it constitutes a breaking point, the dice pool of which suffers this Merit’s dots as a penalty.

Otherworldly Lore (••)

Prerequisite: A relevant Occult specialty

Effect: This merit represents your character’s focus on another realm and its denizens. Upon purchasing the merit, choose a specific type of ephemeral entity (or Supernal Entities for their Path, for mages), such as spirits from the Shadow, demonic entities from the Inferno, ghosts, etc. All rolls to research, interact with (including negotiation), attack, utilize supernatural powers on, or otherwise deal with such creatures benefits from the 9-again quality.

Special: This merit may be purchased multiple times. Each time, a new type of entity is chosen, and the cost raises by 1 dot.

Patient (•)

Effect: Your character knows how to pace herself and take the time to do the job right the first time. When taking an extended action, you may make two additional rolls, above what your Attribute + Skill allows.

Peacemaker (•• or •••)

Prerequisites: Wits •••+ and Empathy •••+

Effect: Your character is keenly attuned to indications of imminent violence, and knows techniques to soothe hot tempers and calm emotions. At two dots, the character may act first in a violent scene to attempt to deescalate the behavior. He spends a point of Willpower and forces his opponent into a social maneuver. The opponent’s base number of Doors is equal to the higher of her Resolve or Composure for this maneuver.

The character rolls each turn as if he had a perfect first impression. If the character fails a roll, his opponent may attack him next turn unless he spends another point of Willpower to continue the social maneuver, but his opponent adds two Doors to her remaining total. If the character dramatically fails, his opponent may attack him immediately without the chance to reinitiate the social maneuver.

If the character removes his opponent’s final Door, her will to fight is exhausted — Storyteller characters will seek a nonviolent resolution to the scene. Players’ characters may either take a Beat and seek a nonviolent alternative, or gain the Reluctant Aggressor Condition.

When facing groups of attackers, this Merit allows the character to single out the leader of the group, or an individual the others look to for guidance. While the social maneuver continues, the other attackers wait to see the outcome. If the leader gains the Reluctant Aggressor Condition, so too do all her allies. The social maneuver automatically fails if the character’s allies initiate any violent actions while the character attempts to avoid violence.

At three dots, the character’s soothing voice and actions are almost supernatural in effect. He may use this Merit against opponents suffering supernaturally inspired anger, including vampires in frenzy or werewolves in Death Rage. These opponents have an additional number of Doors equal to their Supernatural Tolerance traits — talking down an enraged werewolf is very difficult, but the character can do it.

Drawback: The character’s first instinct is to reduce violence, not join it. He suffers –1 to his dice pools for attacking opponents until he suffers damage, which overcomes his deeply-held reluctance to injure others.

Professional Training (• to ••••)

Effect: Your character has extensive training in a particular profession, which offers distinct advantages in a handful of fields. When choosing this Merit, choose or create a Profession for your character. Mark the two Asset Skills on your character sheet. The advantages of Professional Training relate directly to those Asset Skills.

- **Networking:** At the first level of Professional Training, your character builds connections within her chosen field. Take two dots of Contacts relating to that field.

•• Continuing Education: With the repeated efforts in her field of choice, your character tends toward greater successes. When making a roll with her Asset Skills, she benefits from the 9-again quality.

••• Breadth of Knowledge: Due to her advancement in her field, she's picked up a number of particular bits of information and skill unique to her work. Choose a third Asset Skill, and take two Specialties in your character's Asset Skills.

•••• On the Job Training: With the resources at her disposal, your character has access to extensive educational tools and mentorship. Take a Skill dot in an Asset Skill. Whenever you purchase a new Asset Skill dot, take a Beat.

••••• The Routine: With such extensive experience in her field, her Asset Skills have been honed to a fine edge, and she's almost guaranteed at least a marginal success. Before rolling, spend a Willpower point to apply the rote action quality to an Asset Skill. This allows you to reroll all the failed dice on the first roll.

Pusher (•)

Prerequisite: Persuasion ••

Effect: Your character tempts and bribes as second nature. Any time a mark in a Social interaction accepts his soft leverage, improve your Impression as if you'd satisfied his Vice as well as moving the impression up on the chart.

Reconciler (• to •••)

Effect: Your character is an expert at bringing closure to issues and making amends. When undertaking a Social Maneuver to right a wrong or broker peace, remove a number of Doors equal to her dots in this Merit.

Notes: If your character's Burden is Kindly, acts of reconciliation fulfill her as well. When your character accomplishes an applicable Social Maneuver, take a Beat and replenish Willpower points equal to your dots in this Merit.

Relentless (•)

Prerequisites: Athletics ••, Stamina •••

Effect: Your character will not stop running, whether away from a pursuer or toward prey. In any chase your opponents must achieve two additional successes against yours to catch her or elude her.

Reliable Resources (•)

Prerequisites: Occult •••, Library (Occult) •, and a relevant specialty

Effect: Whether through trial and error or a trusted source, your character's Library is especially well "filtered," consisting of books that, while they might not have the whole truth, have nothing but the truth (or at least, any falsehoods are marked and easily ignored). Because of this, you may turn one failure in an extended research roll in the relevant attached specialty into a basic (single) success, or one dramatic failure into a basic failure, a number of times per story equal to the prerequisite Library's dot rating, though no more than once per extended action. In addition, the information garnered will tend to be clearer and less likely to lead you astray; the exact effects of this are left to Storyteller discretion.

Resources (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit reflects your character's disposable income. She might live in an upscale condo, but if her income is tied up in the mortgage and child support payments, she might have little money to throw around. Characters are assumed to have basic necessities without Resources.

The dot rating determines the relative amount of disposable funding the character has available, depending on your particular chronicle's setting. The same amount of money means completely different things in a game set in Silicon Valley compared to one set in the Detroit slums. One dot is a little spending money here and there. Two is a comfortable, middle-class wage. Three is a nicer, upper middle-class life. Four is moderately wealthy. Five is filthy rich.

Every item has an Availability rating. Once per chapter, your character can procure an item at her Resources level or lower, without issue. An item one Availability above her Resources reduces her effective Resources by one dot for a full month, since she has to rapidly liquidate funds. She can procure items two Availability below her Resources without limit (within reason). For example, a character with Resources •••• can procure as many Availability •• disposable cellphones as she needs.

Retainer (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has an assistant, sycophant, servant, or follower on whom she can rely. Establish who this companion is, and how he was acquired. It may be as simple as a paycheck. He might owe your character his life. However it happened, your character has a hold on him.

A Retainer is more reliable than a Mentor, and more loyal than an Ally. On the other hand, a Retainer is a lone person, less capable and influential than the broader Merits.

The Merit's dot rating determines the relative competency of the Retainer. A one-dot Retainer is barely able to do anything of use, such as a pet that knows one useful trick, or a homeless old man that does minor errands for food. A three-dot Retainer is a professional in their field, someone capable in his line of work. A five-dot is one of the best in her class. If a Retainer needs to make a roll, and it's within her field, double the dot rating and use it as a dice pool. For anything else, use the dot rating as a dice pool.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times to represent multiple Retainers.

Rune Caster (••)

Prerequisite: Occult 2

Effect: Your character is known for her ability to read runestones, divining the path of fate and the will of the old gods. By incorporating and casting the stones in her rituals, the character gains +2 on rolls for the Clairvoyance, Medium, or Omen Sensitivity Merits, interpreting a Cahalith's Prophetic Dreams (not necessarily her own) or using the Gift of Insight. This bonus may apply to other appropriate powers or abilities at the Storyteller's discretion.

Additionally, the physical theatre of these readings can place social or religious pressures on those they relate to. After consulting the runestones on a given subject, treat onlookers' impression of you as one step better while convincing them of your prophecy, whether your assessment is genuine or not.

Safe Place (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has somewhere she can go where she can feel secure. While she may have enemies that could attack her there, she's prepared and has the upper hand. The dot rating reflects the security of the place. The actual location, the luxury, and the size are represented by equipment. A one-dot Safe Place might be equipped with basic security systems or a booby trap at the windows and door. A five-dot could have a security crew, infrared scanners at every entrance, or trained dogs. Each place can be an apartment, a mansion, or a hidey-hole.

Unlike most Merits, multiple characters can contribute dots to a single Safe Place, combining their dots into something greater. A Safe Place gives an Initiative bonus equal to the Merit dots. This only applies to a character with dots invested in the Safe Place.

Any efforts to breach the Safe Place suffer a penalty equal to the Merit dots invested. If the character desires, the Safe Place can include traps that cause intruders lethal damage equal to a maximum of the Merit rating (player's choice as to how much damage a given trap inflicts). This requires that the character has at least one dot in Crafts. The traps may be avoided with a Dexterity + Larceny roll, penalized by the Safe Place dots.

Scarred (•)

Prerequisite: Integrity •••• or lower

Effect: You may take this Merit when failing a breaking point, if you have the Experience. Otherwise, with Storyteller discretion, you may take it "on loan," and spend the next earned Experience on it.

When your character fails the breaking point and loses Integrity, write down this Merit along with whatever event caused the breaking point. Your character no longer suffers breaking points from that influence or action.

This Merit is tied to a specific Condition you and your Storyteller choose at the time you take this Merit; that Condition becomes Persistent. The normal resolution terms become a source of Beats. Removing the Scarred Merit becomes the only method for resolving that Condition.

Note: While you have this Merit, you cannot increase your character's Integrity. You may shed it through the Sanctity of Merits rule if you wish to increase Integrity.

Seizing the Edge (••)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, Composure •••

Effect: Your character is always ready for a chase. Whether to escape a threat or hunt down a rival, she's always geared and ready to go. She always has the Edge in the first turn of a chase scene. Additionally, the opponent must make a successful Wits + Composure roll, as if being ambushed, or your character does not have to account for her Speed or Initiative when calculating needed successes in the first turn.

Sleight of Hand (••)

Prerequisite: Larceny •••

Effect: Your character can pick locks and pockets without even thinking about it. She can take one Larceny-based instant action reflexively in a given turn. As well, her Larceny actions go unnoticed unless someone is trying specifically to catch her.

Small-Framed (••)

Effect: Your character is diminutive. He's not five feet, and it's easy to walk into him without noticing. He's Size 4, and thus has one fewer Health box. He gains +2 to any rolls to hide or go unnoticed, and this bonus might apply any time being smaller would be an advantage, such as crawling through smaller spaces. Available only at character creation.

Drawback: In addition to the lower Health, your character might be overlooked or not taken seriously by some people.

Small Unit Tactics (••)

Prerequisites: Presence •••

Effect: Your character is a proficient leader in the field. She can organize efforts and bark orders to remarkable effect. Once per scene, when making a coordinated action that was planned in advance, spend a point of Willpower and an instant action. A number of characters equal to your character's Presence can benefit from the +3 bonus gained from the Willpower expenditure.

Spin Doctor (•)

Prerequisites: Manipulation •••, Subterfuge ••

Effect: Your character can fast-talk and sell bullshit stories as if they were completely flawless. When suffering from Tainted Clues, your character does not ignore successes. Instead, apply a -1 penalty for each relevant Tainted Clue. Using a Tainted Clue only levies a total -2 penalty with this Merit, which includes the -1 taken in lieu of ignoring successes.

Staff (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has a crew of workers or assistants at his disposal. They may be housekeepers, designers, research assistants, animators, cheap thugs, or whatever else makes sense.

For every dot in this Merit, choose one type of assistant, and one Skill. At any reasonable time, his staff can take actions using that Skill. These actions automatically garner a single success. While not useful in contested actions, this guarantees success on minor, mundane activities. Note that your character may have employees without requiring the Staff Merit; Staff simply adds a mechanical advantage for those groups.

Status (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has standing, membership, authority, control over, or respect from a group or organization. This can reflect official standing, or merely informal respect. No matter the source, your character enjoys certain privileges within that structure.

Each instance of this Merit reflects standing in a different group or organization. Your character may have Status (The Luck Gang) •••, Status (Drag Racing Circuit) ••, and Status (Police) •. Each affords its own unique benefits. As you increase dot ratings, your character rises in prominence in the relevant group.

Status only allows advantages within the confines of the group reflected in the Merit. Status (Organized Crime) won't help if your character wants an official concealed carry firearms permit, for example.

Status provides a number of advantages:

First, your character can apply her Status to any Social roll with those over which she has authority or sway.

Second, she has access to group facilities, resources, and funding. Depending on the group, this could be limited by red tape and requisitioning processes. It's also dependent on the resources the particular group has available.

Third, she has pull. If she knows a character's Mentor, Resources, Retainer, Contacts, or Allies, she can block their usage. Once per chapter, she can stop a single Merit from being used, if it's of a lower dot rating than her Status, and if it makes sense for her organization to obstruct that type of person's behavior. In our Organized Crime example, if your character knows that the chief of police has Contacts (Criminal Informant), you may opt to block usage by threatening the informant into silence.

Drawback: Status requires upkeep, and often regular duties. If these duties are not upheld, the Status may be lost. The dots will not be accessible until the character re-establishes her standing. In our Organized Crime example, your character may be expected to pay protection money, offer tribute to a higher authority, or undertake felonious activities.

Striking Looks (• or ••)

Effect: Your character is stunning, alarming, commanding, repulsive, threatening, charming, or otherwise worthy of attention. Determine how your character looks and how people react to that. For one dot, your character gets a +1 bonus on any Social rolls that would be influenced by his looks. For two dots, the benefit increases to +2. Depending on the particulars, this might influence Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion, Subterfuge, or other rolls.

Drawback: Attention is a double-edged sword. Any rolls to spot, notice, or remember your character gain the same dice bonus. Sometimes, your character will draw unwanted attention in social situations. This could cause further complications.

Stunt Driver (• to ••••; Style)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Drive •••, Wits •••

Effect: Your character is an expert behind the wheel, and can push a vehicle beyond normal limits. Each dot of this Merit grants access to another driving technique.

Defensive Driving (•): Your character knows how to protect herself and her vehicle while driving. Subtract her Drive dots from any attempt to hit her vehicle while it's mobile.

Speed Demon (••): Your character is an expert at pushing vehicles to their potential in no time flat. Each success on rolls to accelerate a vehicle (see p.98) raises the vehicle's Speed by 10 instead of 5.

Drift (•••): Your character knows how to use her vehicle's momentum to efficiently turn at high speeds. She never needs to make a maneuvering roll to turn at high speeds.

Clipping (••••): Your character has experience hitting things with her vehicle in such a way as to not hurt herself much. When voluntarily hitting another character or vehicle with hers, ignore damage to her own vehicle equal to her Wits. This is applied before Durability.

Summoner's Soul (••+)

Prerequisites: Occult ••

Effect: Your character has an inherent connection to the invisible realms to the point of finding themselves a natural channel for Summoning them. Upon selecting this merit, choose a favored realm (mages choosing a Supernal realm must choose their Path's). When making a roll to research a summoning ritual, perform one, or utilize a supernatural ability to do the same, spending Willpower provides 5 dice instead of 3 if from the chosen realm, or 4 otherwise. As well, they gain an exceptional success on 3 successes instead of 5 if involving their chosen realm.

Special: Rather than the merit being purchased multiple times, additional realms can be chosen for 1 additional merit dot each, after the initial purchase. The merit has no upper limit.

Support Network (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Allies, Mentor, Retainer, True Friend, or another similar Merit.

Effect: Your character has friends, family, teammates, or any other person or people who provide emotional support in the face of terrifying circumstances. This Merit must be tied to another Social Merit such as Allies, Mentor, Retainer, or True Friend, but can be tied to any Merit representing a person or group that the Storyteller deems fitting. Alternatively, any character with the Empath Merit can be the anchor point for this Merit.

Once per chapter, you may prolong an Integrity breaking point by spending a point of Willpower. During the same chapter, your character must have a meaningful interaction with her Support Network, or the breaking point dramatically fails. If she interacts with her Support Network, add her dots in this Merit to the roll to resist the breaking point, and the roll achieves exceptional success on three successes instead of five.

Survivalist (•)

Prerequisites: Survival •••, Iron Stamina •••

Effect: Your character has been trained to fight even through the most dangerous environmental extremes. When inflicted with the Extreme Cold Tilt or Extreme Heat Tilt she doesn't begin taking the normal -1 to her rolls until a number of hours equal to her Stamina.

Sympathetic (••)

Effect: Your character is very good at letting others get close. This gives him an edge in getting what he wants. At the beginning of a Social maneuvering attempt, you may choose to accept a Condition such as Leveraged, or Swooned in order to immediately eliminate two of the subject's Doors.

Notes: If your character's Burden is Bereaved, the subject gains the same Condition, directed at you.

Table Turner (•)

Prerequisites: Composure •••, Manipulation •••, Wits •••

Effects: Your character can turn any attempt to leverage her into an opportunity. Any time a character initiates a Social Maneuvering action against yours, you may spend a Willpower point to preempt that attempt with one of your own, or another Social action.

Takes One to Know One (•)

Effect: Normally, when Uncovering a Clue, your character suffers a -2 penalty if the crime aligns with his Vice. However, it takes a criminal to know a criminal, and your character has a deep-seated understanding of his particular weakness. Instead, take a +2 and the 9-again quality on any investigation rolls when the crime aligns with your character's particular Vice. The successful investigation is considered fulfilling his Vice.

Taste (•)

Prerequisite: Crafts ••, and a Specialty in Crafts or Expression

Effect: Your character has refined tastes, and can identify minor details in fashion, food, architecture, and other forms of artistry and craftsmanship. Not only does this give her an eye for detail, it makes her a center of attention in critical circles. She can also appraise items within her area of expertise. With a Wits + Skill roll, depending on the creation in question (Expression for poetry, Crafts for architecture, for example), your character can pick out obscure details about the item that other, less discerning minds would not. For each success, ask one of the following questions, or take a +1 bonus to any Social rolls pertaining to groups interested in the art assessed for the remainder of the scene.

- What is the hidden meaning in this?
- What was the creator feeling during its creation?
- What's its weakest point?
- Which other witness is most moved by this piece?
- How should one best appreciate this piece?

Tolerance for Biology (•)

Prerequisite: Resolve ***

Effect: Most people turn away at the sight of blood, other bodily fluids, or exotic biology. Your character has seen enough that nothing turns her stomach. When other characters must resist shock or physical repulsion from the disgusting and morbid, your character stands her ground. You do not need to make Composure, Stamina, or Resolve rolls to withstand the biologically strange. This doesn't mean she's immune to fear; she's just used to nature in all its nasty forms.

Notes: Sin-Eater characters receive this Merit for free, even if they do not meet the prerequisites.

Trained Observer (•, or •••)

Prerequisite: Wits *** or Composure ***

Effect: Your character has spent years in the field, catching tiny details and digging for secrets. She might not have a better chance of finding things, but she has a better chance of finding important things. Any time you make a Perception roll (usually Wits + Composure), you benefit from the 9-again quality. With the three-dot version, you get 8-again.

True Friend (•••)

Effect: Your character has a True Friend. While that friend may have specific functions covered by other Merits (Allies, Contacts, Retainer, Mentor, et cetera), True Friend represents a deeper, truly trusting relationship that cannot be breached. Unless your character does something egregious to cause it, her True Friend will not betray her. Additionally, the Storyteller cannot kill her True Friend as part of a plot without your express permission. Any rolls to influence a True Friend against your character suffer a five-die penalty. In addition, once per story, your character can regain one spent Willpower by having a meaningful interaction with her True Friend.

Untouchable (•)

Prerequisites: Manipulation ***, Subterfuge **

Effect: Your character commits crimes, and is always a step ahead of pursuers. Because of his methodical planning, any roll to investigate him suffers the Incomplete Clue tag unless it achieves exceptional success.

Vice-Ridden (••)

Effect: Your character is one of the worst examples of humanity in the Chronicles of Darkness. He has two Vices, although he may still only regain one Willpower per scene he indulges himself.

Virtuous (••)

Effect: Your character is a light of good in the Chronicles of Darkness. She has two Virtues. The limitations of how many times she may refresh Willpower using a Virtue remain the same, but it's up to you which Virtue she uses each time.

Fighting Merits

Aggressive Driving (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Resolve ***, Fast Reflexes ***, Drive ***

Style Tags: Tactical (Police) or (Street)

Effect: Any vehicle can become a weapon when your character is behind the wheel. From the earliest days of bootleggers these maneuvers have passed between police and criminals as a means to evade or stop other vehicles, even at high speeds.

Powerslide (•): Your character can slide into turns and gain momentum coming out. Make a reflexive Dexterity + Drive + Handling roll anytime your character's vehicle comes to a curve, successes add to her total for that turn in a contested pursuit. This causes one point of Structure damage to the vehicle.

Bump and Run (••): Your character brings her vehicle alongside an opponent's and swipes his bumper, causing his rear tires to lose traction. First developed in stock car racing, this technique is used by police departments around the world as a safe means of ending a pursuit. Roll Dexterity + Drive + Handling minus an aware opponent's Defense. If successful, an opponent must succeed on an immediate Dexterity + Drive roll or lose control of his vehicle.

J-turn (•••): Your character can turn her vehicle around so quickly she baffles pursuers. If, during a contested pursuit, an opponent achieves more successes and catches up to her she can spend a point of Willpower and roll Dexterity + Drive + Handling with a -2 penalty. Success allows her to restart the chase, but now going in the opposite direction. This maneuver can only work successfully once per scene.

Swoop and Squat (••••): Your character cuts off an opponent's vehicle and jams her brakes, forcing an opponent to stop or wreck. A favorite of insurance fraudsters, this technique is most effective with another car beside the target vehicle to pin it in. Anytime she gains more successes than victim's Wits in a contested pursuit, the victim must make a reflexive Resolve + Composure + Handling to stop his vehicle or else he crashes into the other vehicle's rear. Note that a victim can choose to crash instead of stop.

Armed Defense (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity ***, Weaponry ••, Defensive Combat: Weaponry

Style Tags: Heavy Melee, Light Melee

You're able to use a weapon to stop people who are trying to kill you. Often deployed by police officers using riot shields or telescoping batons, it's just as effective while using a chair leg.

Cover the Angles (•): Whenever you take a Dodge action, reduce the Defense penalties for multiple attackers by 1. You can apply your full Defense against the first two attacks, suffer a -1 penalty against the third, and so on.

Weak Spot (••): You swing against your opponent's arm, rather than his own weapon. Use this ability when defending against an armed attacker. If your Defense reduces his attack pool to 0, he's disarmed. If you Dodge, you disarm your opponent if your Defense roll reduces his attack successes to 0.

Aggressive Defense (•••): Anyone dumb enough to come near you is liable to get hurt. When you take a Dodge action, if you score more successes than any attacker, you deal one point of lethal damage to the attacker per extra success. Your weapon bonus doesn't apply to this extra damage.

Drawback: You must spend a point of Willpower and declare that you are using Aggressive Defense at the start of the turn. You cannot combine this maneuver with Press the Advantage or Weak Spot.

Iron Guard (••••): You and your weapon are one. At the start of each turn, you can choose to reduce your weapon bonus (down to a minimum of 0) to increase your Defense by a like amount. If you take a Dodge action, add your full weapon bonus to your Defense after doubling your pool.

Press the Advantage (•••••): You create an opening with a block, and lash out with a fist or foot. When you're taking a Dodge action, if your Defense roll reduces the attacker's successes to 0, you can make an unarmed attack against that opponent at a -2 penalty. Your opponent applies Defense as normal.

Armed Restraint (••)

Prerequisites: Staff Fighting •••

Effect: Your character knows how to use a pole with a hook or noose on the end of it to restrain animal and human targets. Using a suitable weapon, such as a catch pole or shepherd's crook, your character can grapple and immediately apply the Hold maneuver on success. During subsequent turns her opponent's grapple rolls are penalized by the weapon's damage rating.

Avoidance (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Manipulation •••, Athletics ••, Stealth ••

Style Tags: Movement (Agile)

Effect: Your character's only goal in a fight is not to get hurt. She tries to create situations where opponents hurt themselves or target her big mean friends instead. There is no formal training for this Style; it's a mixture of ingenuity and a person's innate desire to avoid pain.

Insignificance (•): When a fight starts you ease out of sight and try to become a part of the scenery. Make a roll of Manipulation + Stealth – the highest Composure in the room. If successful, your character comes across as very non-threatening. Unless an opponent perceives no other threats around him whatsoever she cannot be the direct target of his attacks. This effect ends if she attacks or takes any threatening actions during the scene.

Coattails (••): Your character's reaction to being attacked is to dive behind her bigger friend and let him take care of it. When taking a Dodge action she can designate an ally in close range whose hasn't attacked yet that turn. Go Prone. If hit by an opponent's attack, her ally can choose to take the damage.

Whack-a-Mole (•••): Your character makes herself into a tempting target and unsuspecting opponents end up doing more damage to themselves than her. Once per turn you may make a contested roll of Manipulation + Persuasion + Avoidance against an opponent's unarmed or melee attack roll. If the character gets the most successes the attack does no damage, and instead inflicts the Arm Wrack Tilt on the opponent.

Play Dead (••••): When your character wants to bow out of a combat she makes even the most superficial wounds look fatal. After any attack your character sustained lethal damage from, roll Manipulation + Subterfuge. Opponents require a contested Wits + Composure roll to notice that she's still alive.

Berserker (Style; • to •••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Iron Stamina •••

Style Tags: Attitude (Enraged)

Effect: Your character enters a controlled madness in combat. Whether a believer in the throes of ecstatic fervor or a warrior emulating the Norse berserks, this Style is not about technique but about achieving the right state of mind.

The Red Mist (•): Your character focuses inward, seeking out her source of rage within. By spending a point of Willpower she inflicts the Insane Tilt on herself for the remainder of the scene.

War Cry (••): Your character chills an opponent's blood with her mad howl. Instead of attacking, roll a contested Strength + Intimidation versus opponent's Resolve + Composure. If your character gets the most successes, her opponent suffers a penalty equal to your successes to any action other than Dodging for the next turn.

Manic Brutality (•••): Your character lashes out with a single-minded determination to destroy. Her all-out unarmed attacks have a +1 bonus to hit specified targets. If she's using a weapon then she may substitute its Durability for its weapon bonus.

Drawback: If she's using a weapon, then all damage taken by her opponent is also applied directly to the weapon's Structure.

Body as Weapon (••)

Prerequisites: Stamina •••, Brawl ••

Effect: Your character has honed her body to be a hardened weapon. She has trained long, punishing hours to inure herself to the pain of the cracked knuckles, broken hands, and crushed toes that come with hitting others with her body. She can hit harder and more often without flinching. Your character's unarmed strikes still cause bashing damage normally, but they add one point of bashing damage on a successful hit.

Boot Party (••)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••

Style Tags: Striking

Effect: Your character understands the effectiveness of grinding her heel into a delicate part of a downed opponent's anatomy. When attacking an opponent in the prone position, she may make an unarmed attack at a –3 penalty in addition to normal modifiers. Any damage inflicted is lethal.

Bowmanship (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Firearms ••, Trained Observer •

Style Tags: Archery

Effect: Your character is a patient hunter with a bow. She fires precision shots across long distances to take out targets that had no idea she was even there. This Style focuses on a character's ability to aim by judging distance and trajectory. It uses a dice pool of Dexterity + Firearms for its attacks.

Arcing Fire (•): Your character knows how to tilt her aim to make a shot hit true even from afar. Double range increments, or increase her range band by one degree.

Bullseye (••): Your character places her shots to hit deep into an opponent's weak spots. When attacking a specified target you may lower your bow's damage rating to any amount (0 or greater) to add +1 and the 8-again quality to the attack roll.

Out of Nowhere (•••): Your character fires her arrows and then ducks out of sight, leaving her enemies bleeding and confused. Roll Dexterity + Stealth as a reflexive action after attacking a target that is unaware of her presence. Her target must roll Wits + Composure – her successes, where failure applies the Shaken Condition and the attacker is hidden.

Death from Above (••••): Loose vertical shots to reach opponents behind cover. Reduce their Concealment by 1 per 10 yards (9 meters) added to the shot's range. Or ignore entirely by reducing range band by one degree.

Boxing (Style, • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Strength ••, Dexterity ••, Stamina ••, Brawl ••, Athletics ••

Style Tags: Striking

Effect: Trading blows with the hands dates back to Classical times, and probably earlier — some biologists believe our hands have been optimized to deliver blows. There are hundreds of folk styles of boxing, from West Africa's Dambe to the Filipino method known as Suntukan or Panantukan. This style concentrates on the modern combat sport, which combines European methods with innovations developed by trainers or borrowed from other cultures. Your character is trained in modern boxing, or a similar traditional style.

Head Protection (•): The head is the primary target for most boxers, so your character has learned to protect it by bobbing, weaving, and angling away from blows. Your character's Defense increases by 1 against unarmed strikes or weapons that use the Brawl Skill, and attackers suffer an additional -1 penalty to target her head.

Defensive Jab (••): Your character interrupts attacks with well-timed punches from the lead hand. Any time an opponent misses with a Brawl or Weaponry attack, your character inflicts one point of bashing damage which ignores armor. If your character Dodges, change this to one point of bashing damage per two successes that exceed the opponent's attack successes (a minimum of one, but round fractions down).

Knockout Artist (•••): Your character knows how to knock someone out. She now treats the target's Size as 1 lower at all times for the purposes of inflicting the Stunned Tilt, reflecting her ability to casually hit someone in the head. If you suffer a penalty to target the head as a true specified target, treat the target's Size as 2 lower for the purpose of inflicting the Tilt.

Combination (••••): Your character learns to fire off several blows in rapid succession, so that if one hits, the others often follow. If your character's Brawl strike succeeds, roll her Dexterity dots as dice and add successes to damage to reflect other blows striking home.

Out for the Count (•••••): When your character knocks someone out they don't get back up any time soon. When she inflicts the Stunned Tilt it not only lasts for a number of turns equal to the damage she inflicted, but it produces true unconsciousness for that period unless the victim spends a point of Willpower.

Chain Weapons (Style; • to ••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Dexterity ••, Athletics ••, Weaponry ••

Style Tags: Flexible

Effect: Your character knows how to use a length of chain as a weapon. These maneuvers require at least a yard's (or meter's) worth of chain and can be any design from a martial artist's chain whip to one ripped off the sprocket of a motorcycle. The Style is taught among traditional Chinese weapon styles but is also favored among everyday street gangs.

Imposing Defense (•): Your character spins her chain around, creating a whirling metal barrier between her and her opponent. Sacrificing her Defense, and she inflicts her weapon damage rating + 1 in bashing damage to any opponent who attempts an unarmed or melee attack against her that turn.

Bring Down the House (••): Handy in rooms with chandeliers or dodgy support beams, your character lashes her chain around some part of the environment over an opponent's head and then gives it a good yank. She makes an attack against an object with a penalty for the object's Size (use the specified target chart as a guideline). If successful, she inflicts bashing damage equal to the object's Structure on all characters within range. Characters with their turn still available can Dodge, with successes removing damage.

Cheap Shot (••)

Prerequisites: Street Fighting •••, Subterfuge ••

Effect: Your character is a master at the bait and switch. She can look off in an odd direction and prompt her opponent to do the same, or she might step on his toes to distract him. She fights dirty. Make a Dexterity + Subterfuge roll as a reflexive action. The opponent's player contests with Wits + Composure. If you score more successes, the opponent loses his Defense for the next turn. Each time a character uses this maneuver in a scene, it levies a cumulative -2 penalty to further uses since the opposition gets used to the tricks.

Choke Hold (••)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••

If you can get your hands on someone, they're putty in your hands. When grappling, your character can use the Choke move:

• **Choke:** If you rolled more successes than twice the victim's Stamina, he's unconscious for (six - Stamina) minutes. You must first have succeeded at a Hold move. If you don't score enough successes at first, you can Choke on future turns and total your successes.

Clinch Strike (•)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••

Style Tags: Striking, Grappling, Tactical (Street)

Effect: Most people will instinctively grab anyone they want to hit, but your character has trained to hit hard and accurately from a clinch position, using short punches, elbows, and knees. She inflicts standard Brawl damage when initiating a grapple instead of sacrificing the opportunity to damage someone in order to grab.

Close Quarters Combat (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, Athletics ••, Brawl •••

Style Tags: Tactical (Military)

Your character knows that hitting someone in the face is an easy way to break the little bones in his hand. To that end, he's perfected the art of using the environment to hurt people.

Firing Lines (•): In some situations, your character's best option is a tactical retreat — especially if he's inadvertently brought a knife to a gunfight. He can run for cover as a reaction to a ranged attack instead of dropping prone. You give up your action for the turn, but your character can get to any cover that's within twice his Speed.

Hard Surfaces (••): Bouncing someone's head off a urinal, computer monitor, or brick wall is a handy way to increase the amount of hurt inflicted while not breaking the aforementioned hand bones. When your character is grappling someone, he can bounce them off a hard surface with a Damage move. He deals lethal damage, then immediately ends the grapple.

Armored Coffin (•••): The problem with protection is simple: the very things that protect your opponents can be turned against them. That holds true for body armor just as much as anything else. Sure, it blocks bullets and knives, but get in a clinch and your character's opponent might as well be wearing a straightjacket. When he grapples an opponent, add their general armor rating to your dice pool. When he uses a Damage move, ignore his opponent's armor. This technique can't be used in conjunction with Hard Surfaces.

Prep Work (••••): If your character has a second to look around, he can catch someone by surprise almost anywhere. When launching a surprise attack, your Dexterity + Stealth roll becomes a rote action.

Drawback: Your character can't use this Merit to set up sniper attacks — his ambush must use Brawl or Weaponry.

Turnabout (•••••): If your character's caught short in a fight, his opponent's weapon suits him just fine. When he attempts to Disarm his opponent, step the results up one level — on a failure, his opponent drops the weapon. On a success, your character takes possession of his opponent's weapon. On an exceptional success, your character has the weapon and his opponent takes two points of bashing damage.

Combat Archery (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Athletics ••, Quick Draw (Bow) •

Style Tags: Archery

Effect: Your character uses a bow for rapid draws that riddle opponents with arrows. She knows how to move across the battlefield while firing from any angle. This Style is about trick shots and using archery in the thick of a fight. It uses a dice pool of Dexterity + Athletics for its attacks.

Rapid Nock (•): Your character has trained herself to have another arrow set and her bow drawn within a heartbeat of her last shot. As long as there is a supply of arrows in reach she can make an attack every turn without taking an action to position them on the string. Also, ignore the bow's Initiative penalty.

Reflex Aiming (••): Your character knows how to time her shots to hit her opponents and not her allies. Ignore penalties for firing a bow into close combat.

Parthian Shot (•••): Your character feints retreat to lure an opponent in for a close-range shot. The first time in a turn an opponent attempts a close-range attack, you may choose to Dodge as normal. However, any successes in excess of your opponent's are applied as attack successes with your bow against him.

Rain of Arrows (••••): Your character fires a group of shots at multiple opponents in the blink of an eye. She can attack with a bow as an autofire medium burst with three arrows hitting up to three different targets.

Drawback: This maneuver sacrifices distance for speed. Triple all range penalties for medium and long distance.

Trick Shot (•••••): Your character rolls, leaps, and runs along walls while firing arrows in any direction. Your character can fire her bow simultaneously while taking an Athletics action, including maneuvers from Movement Styles. This imposes a –2 penalty to both rolls.

Covert Operative (•)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, Dexterity •••, Stealth ••

Style Tags: Tactical (Military)

Effect: Your character is trained in getting the jump on her opponents. She creeps up on unsuspecting enemies from the shadows and neutralizes them before anyone realizes anything's happening. When your character ambushes an opponent, the victim loses the 10-again quality on his roll to notice the attack. Even if he successfully notices your character, your character acts at +3 Initiative in the first turn.

Defensive Combat (•)

Prerequisite: Brawl • or Weaponry •; choose one when this Merit is selected

Effect: Your character is trained in avoiding damage in combat. Use her Brawl or Weaponry to calculate Defense, rather than Athletics. Your character can learn both versions of this Merit, allowing you to use any of the three Skills to calculate Defense. However, you cannot use Weaponry to calculate Defense unless she actually has a weapon in her hand.

Disabling Tactics (Style; • to •••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Weaponry ••

Style Tags: Heavy Melee, Light Melee

Effect: Your character has training in disabling opponents, making it easier to bring live captives home to Tenochtitlan for sacrifices.

Breaking the Branch (•): Your character is skilled at striking arms and legs in the midst of combat. Reduce the penalty for making an attack specifically at the arm, hand, or leg by two.

Cast Like Sand (••): Your character can send enemies flying by encroaching on their space during a fight. When she successfully hits and deals damage with her weapon, you may spend a point of Willpower to inflict the Knocked Down Tilt on the subject.

Strike the Rising Dog (•••): Your character knows that the best way to keep someone out of the fight is by keeping them on the ground, and she's trained in doing so. When someone within her striking distance tries to rise from a prone position, you may spend a point of Willpower. The character makes a reflexive Weaponry attack against the subject. If successful, in addition to any damage from the attack, the subject also fails to rise.

Drone Control (Style; • to •••)

Prerequisites: Intelligence •••, Computer •••, Drive ••

Style Tags: Tactical (Military) or (Police)

Effect: Your character knows how to operate weapon systems via remote. Though more impersonal than a knife or a gun, armed drones are quickly becoming a mainstay of the modern battlefield and increasingly sophisticated in the consumer market. These maneuvers work independently of the sophistication of the actual device. An RC car with a mounted pistol and a Wi-Fi receiver works just as well as a state-of-the-art military drone for the purposes of using this Style.

Remote Immersion (•): When your character accesses her drone she enters a focused state that lets her perceive and react to things as if she were physically present. Perception rolls made using the drone gain the 9-again quality.

Interface (••): Your character has honed her control over her drones to the level of instinct. Spend a point of Willpower; she can take an additional instant action per turn with her drone. Drones capable of attacking can only make one attacking action per turn.

Overclock (•••): Your character can push her drone past the boundaries of its hardware. By sacrificing a point of Structure, she can add +2 to Physical actions the drone makes that turn.

Falconry (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: This Merit works in conjunction with any predatory bird of at least Size 2. The character must possess Wits •••, Animal Ken •••, and share the Bonded Condition with the bird.

Style Tags: Creature (Claw)

Effect: Your bird performs incredible feats at your command. You purchase this Merit for your character, who may apply it to any bird she shares the Bonded Condition with after a reasonable amount of time training together. Used for both hunting and sport, this practice has roots going back into antiquity and among numerous cultures. While not as widespread now as in the past, finding a trainer for this style is still relatively easy. Unless otherwise noted, these Merits constitute actions the bird takes independently, with only a simple, one-word or gesture command. Thus, your character does not have to dedicate an action to make them happen. Additionally, possession of this Merit allows your character to spend Willpower to benefit the bird's actions in her presence.

Predator's Vigil (•): The presence of your bird instinctively wards off prey animals. Even a flock of pigeons or swarm of rats won't come too close when a natural predator circles the skies. Any creature of equal or smaller Size than your bird in his immediate vicinity has the Shaken Condition applied to them for any action other than hiding or fleeing the area.

Flyby (••): Your character commands her bird to dive past an enemy at high speed, creating a distraction. Roll Presence + Intimidation against an opponent's Resolve + Composure as an attack action for the bird. If successful, the opponent takes a –3 penalty to his next action.

Retrieve Item (*):** Your bird knows how to grab small items and bring them back to you, even snatching them from someone's hand. On your character's turn she can designate any object of the bird's Size or smaller within her and her bird's field of vision that the bird will retrieve. An opponent actively holding onto an item treats this as a Disarm maneuver, but if successful the bird's roll is automatically considered an exceptional success. This generally requires the bird make an all-out attack.

Rake the Eyes (**):** Your character commands her bird to claw at an opponent's eyes. Take a -1 penalty to attack. A successful attack applies the Blinded Tilt.

Fighting Finesse (**)

Prerequisites: Dexterity ***, a Specialty in Weaponry or Brawl

Effect: Choose a Specialty in Weaponry or Brawl when you purchase this Merit. Your character's extensive training in that particular weapon or style has allowed them to benefit more from their alacrity and agility than their strength. You may substitute your character's Dexterity for her Strength when making rolls with that Specialty. This Merit may be purchased multiple times to gain its benefit with multiple Specialties.

Firefight (Style; • to ***)

Prerequisites: Composure ***, Dexterity ***, Athletics **, Firearms **

Style Tags: Pistol, Rifle

Effect: Your character is comfortable with a gun. She's been trained in stressful situations, and knows how to keep herself from being shot, while still shooting at her opponents. This Style is about moving, strafing, and taking shots when you get them. It's not a series of precision techniques; it's for using a gun practically in a real-world situation.

Shoot First (•): In a firefight, the person shot first is usually the loser. Your character has trained herself to fire first in an altercation. If her gun is drawn, add her Firearms score to her Initiative. If she has Quick Draw, she can use Shoot First to draw and fire with increased Initiative in the first turn of combat.

Suppressive Fire ():** Sometimes, the purpose of a shot is to distract, not necessarily to hit. Your character is trained to fire off a handful of rounds with the intent to startle opponents and force impulse reactions. When using the Covering Fire maneuver (p. 90), her opponents cannot benefit from aiming against her. She can apply her Defense against incoming Firearms attacks, in addition to any cover bonuses. Additionally, her training allows her to use Suppressive Fire with a semi-automatic weapon.

Secondary Target (*):** Sometimes, shooting an opponent behind cover is all but impossible. However, a bullet can knock objects off balance, or cause ricochets. By using Secondary Target, your character opts not to hit her target, but instead strike them with any collateral objects that might be nearby. She causes bashing damage instead of lethal, but ignores all cover penalties to the roll. The weapon's damage rating does not add to the damage in this case.

Grappling (Style; • to ***)

Prerequisites: Stamina ***, Strength **, Athletics **, Brawl **

Style Tags: Grappling

Effect: Your character has trained in wrestling, or one of many grappling martial arts.

Sprawl (•): Your character can adjust his weight to defend himself in a grapple. While in a grapple, the character's opponent cannot apply the Drop Prone or Take Cover moves.

Standing Throw (•): Your character knows how to toss someone over his hip, trip, or sweep her while keeping his footing. He may inflict the Knocked Down Tilt as a grappling maneuver, but if he remains standing his opponent automatically breaks free.

Small Joint Manipulation ():** By accepting a -2 penalty to the attack roll, your character may immediately dislocate or otherwise bend the opponent's fingers in one hand (or toes in one foot, in some circumstances) the wrong way. This occurs instead of any other maneuver, inflicting one point of bashing damage per two successes (round down, but always at least one) and the Arm or Leg Wrack Tilt. If the attack targets a hand, it can no longer hold objects until the associated damage heals. Optionally, you may assign the Tactical (Street) Style Tag to this maneuver to represent a form of "underhanded" fighting.

Takedown ():** Your character can take an opponent to the ground rapidly. With a normal roll, you may choose to render an opponent prone instead of establishing a grapple. Also, you may choose to cause bashing damage equal to the successes rolled.

Ippon (*):** Additional Prerequisite: Takedown Maneuver. While using Drop Prone with the Takedown Maneuver, your character hurls his opponent to the ground with exceptional force. Double the damage of the takedown for the purpose of inflicting the Stunned Tilt, but not as actual damage.

Joint Lock (*):** you use joint locks and immobilizing tactics to limit your opponent's movement. You can use the Joint Lock move in a grapple. Next turn, your opponent suffers bashing damage equal to your successes. You can use Joint Lock as a lead-in to the Restrain move. In addition, any successful overpowering maneuvers your character uses cause 1L damage in addition to their normal effects.

Dynamic Guard (**):** While prone, your character uses his body to shake and redirect his enemy. Reduce the opponent's dice pool to grapple by your character's Dexterity. Unfortunately, your character can't get up from prone while using this maneuver.

Lock Flow (**):** Additional Prerequisite: Joint Lock Maneuver. When your character's opponent slips out of one lock you know how to go with the motion and trap her in another. You gain +2 to grapple rolls when you declare ahead of time that you're attempting a joint lock.

Positional Dominance (***):** Your character knows how to hurt and tire an opponent from any position, crushing the life out of him. No matter which maneuver you choose on a successful grapple, your character inflicts one point of bashing damage per two successes scored, rounding down, but always inflicting at least one point. If your character chooses a damaging maneuver, add this to the damage inflicted. You may choose not to inflict this damage.

Tap or Snap (***):** Additional Prerequisite: Joint Lock Maneuver. If your character succeeds in a grapple in the turn after applying the Joint Lock maneuver, he may allow the opponent to choose between accepting the Beaten Down Condition, or suffering an Arm or Leg Wrack (attacker's choice) and lethal damage equal to the successes scored, as your character breaks or dislocates the relevant limb.

Ground and Pound (**)

Prerequisites: Brawl **

Style Tags: Striking, Grappling, Tactical (Street)

Effect: Your character skillfully uses gravity to drop a fist, elbow, knee, or other strike on a prone opponent. When using Brawl to strike or inflict the Damage grappling maneuver on a prone opponent, you may declare your character uses this maneuver. You gain the rote benefit (re-roll failed dice) to your attack, but automatically fall prone; and if grappled, your opponent automatically breaks free.

Ground Fighter (**)

Prerequisites: Wits ***, Dexterity ***, Brawl **

Style Tags: Grappling

Effect: Your character knows how to fight from her back. Many mixed martial arts styles emphasize being able to fight from the ground. Brawl and weaponry attacks do not gain the +2 bonus to attack your character when prone. She can perform the Stand Up maneuver.

• **Stand Up:** When grappling an opponent from the prone position you can stand up without having to Break Free of the grapple.

Headbutt (•)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••

Style Tags: Striking, Grappling

Effect: Your character has found few arguments she can't end by ramming her skull into a softer part of the human anatomy. This Merit allows for a new grappling maneuver:

• **Headbutt:** Your character inflicts the Stunned Tilt on her opponent. Each use of this maneuver in a scene imposes a -2 penalty as the shock and surprise of this tactic wears off.

Heavy Weapons (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Stamina •••, Strength •••, Athletics ••, Weaponry ••

Style Tags: Heavy Melee

Effect: Your character is trained with heavy weapons which require strength, wide range, and follow through more than direct speed and accuracy. This Style may be used with a two-handed weapon such as a claymore, chainsaw, pike, or an uprooted street sign.

Sure Strike (•): Your character doesn't always hit the hardest or the most frequently, but she guarantees a deadly strike when she does hit. You can reflexively remove three dice from any attack dice pool (to a minimum of zero) to add one to your character's weapon damage rating for the turn. These dice must be removed after calculating any penalties from the environment or the opponent's Defense.

Threat Range (••): Your character's weapon is immense and keeps opponents at bay. If you opt not to move or Dodge during your turn, any character moving into your character's proximity suffers one lethal damage and a penalty to their Defense equal to your character's weapon damage rating. This penalty only lasts for one turn. This cannot be used in a turn the character is Dodging.

Bring the Pain (•••): Your character's strikes stun and incapacitate as well as causing massive trauma to the body. Sacrifice your character's Defense to use Bring the Pain. Make a standard attack roll. Any damage you score with Bring the Pain counts as a penalty to all actions the victim takes during their next turn. So, if you cause four lethal damage, the opponent is at -4 on their next attack.

Warding Stance (••••): Your character holds her weapon in such a way as to make attacks much harder. If her weapon's drawn, spend a point of Willpower reflexively to add her weapon's damage rating as armor for the turn. This will not protect against firearms.

Rending (•••••): Your character's cuts leave crippling, permanent wounds. By spending a Willpower point before making an attack roll, her successful attacks cause one level of aggravated damage in addition to her weapon's damage rating. This Willpower point does not add to the attack roll.

Improvised Weaponry (Style; • to •••)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, Weaponry •

Style Tags: Tactical (Street)

Most people don't walk around armed. While someone pulling a knife or a gun can cool a hostile situation down, it can also cause things to boil over — an argument that wouldn't be more than harsh words suddenly ends up with three people in the morgue. If your character is on the receiving end of someone pulling a knife, it helps to have something in his hand as well.

Your character is good at making do with what he's got. Sometimes he's lucky — if your character's in a bar, he's got a lot of glass bottles, or maybe a pool cue, to play with. However, he's got something like a sixth sense, and can find a weapon almost anywhere.

Always Armed (•): Your character can always get his hands on something dangerous, and he has an instinctive understanding of how to put it to good — and deadly — use. At the start of your turn, make a reflexive Wits + Weaponry roll to grab an object suitable for use as a weapon in pretty much any environment. (The player is encouraged to work with the Storyteller to determine an appropriate item — a large, jagged rock in the wilderness, for example, or a heavy glass ashtray with one sharp, broken edge in a dive bar.) Regardless of what he picks up, the weapon has a +0 weapon modifier, -1 initiative penalty, Size 1, Durability 2, and Structure 4. On an exceptional success, increase the weapon modifier and Size by 1, but the initiative penalty increases to -2. Whatever your character grabs doesn't cause you to suffer the normal -1 penalty for wielding an improvised weapon (see p. 94).

In Harm's Way (••): Your character's got a knack for putting his weapon in the way of an oncoming attack, no matter how small or inappropriate for blocking it might be. While he's wielding an improvised weapon acquired with Always Armed, you can treat the Structure of your character's weapon as general armor against a single Brawl or Weaponry attack. Any damage he takes inflicts an equal amount of damage to the improvised weapon, bypassing Durability. Your character can use the weapon to attack later in the same turn, but can only use this ability when applying his Defense to an attack.

Breaking Point (•••): One sure way to win a fight is to hit the other guy so hard that he doesn't get back up, even if that means losing a weapon in the process. When making an all-out attack with an improvised weapon acquired with Always Armed, you can reduce the weapon's Structure by any amount down to a minimum of 0. Every 2 points of Structure spent in this way adds 1 to the weapon modifier for that one single attack. Declare any Structure loss before making the attack; this Structure is reduced even if the attack does no damage. If the weapon is reduced to 0 Structure, it is automatically destroyed after the attack. You can use this technique in conjunction with In Harm's Way, allowing your character to parry an attack made on a higher Initiative and then go on the offensive, provided that the weapon wasn't destroyed.

Iron Chin (•• or ••••)

Prerequisites: Resolve •••, Stamina •••

Style Tags: Attitude (Determined), Striking, Tactical (Street)

Effect: Your character's taken her share of beatings and can't be scared by pain or the sight of her own blood. This Merit comes in two levels. At •• dots, she no longer suffers the Beaten Down Tilt from any amount of bashing damage. At •••• dots, she never suffers Beaten Down, period. This is probably more foolhardy than brave. If your chronicle doesn't feature conflicts where Beaten Down features prominently, don't use this Merit.

Iron Skin (•• or ••••)

Prerequisites: Martial Arts •• or Street Fighting ••, Stamina •••

Through rigorous conditioning, or extensive scarring, your character has grown resistant to harm. She can shrug off shots that would topple bigger fighters. She knows how to take a strike, and can even move into a hit from a weapon to minimize harm. She gains armor against bashing attacks; one point of armor with ••, and two points of armor with ••••. By spending a point of Willpower when hit, she can downgrade some lethal damage from a successful attack into bashing. Downgrade one damage at ••, two with ••••.

K-9 (Style, • to ••••)

Prerequisite: This Merit works in conjunction with a dog of least Size 3. The character must possess Wits ●●●, Animal Ken ●●●, and share the Bonded Condition with the dog.

Style Tags: Creature (Bite), Tactical (Police)

Effect: Under your supervision a dog may perform exceptional actions. You purchase this Merit for your character, who may apply it to any dog she shares the Bonded Condition with after a reasonable amount of training time together. Police and military forces are the place to go to learn to work with an animal in combat, but independent trainers might know this style as well.

Note that each maneuver includes the special ability to never require an Animal Ken roll to order its use. Your character's dog obeys without a second's pause.

Detection (●): Your character's dog has been trained to detect a certain class of substances by smell and indicate its location. Choose from one of the following: Drugs, Explosives, Tracks, People, and Corpses. When your character works with his dog it gains the Rote benefit (re-roll failed dice) on Wits + Survival rolls to detect the target substances. You may purchase this Merit multiple times for different categories.

Targeted Bite (●●): Your character may command his dog to target specific body parts. Reduce penalties to attack specific targets by -2.

Tactical Positioning (●●●): The character's dog knows how to position itself to make it difficult for opponents to fight you both. When acting side by side against a single opponent, one of the pair gains +1 to Defense against that opponent, and the other benefits from +2 to attack rolls targeting the opponent. Your character decides which participant gets the offensive or defensive bonus at the beginning of each turn. Finally, you never take a penalty to ranged combat rolls to avoid shooting the dog, because he avoids your line of fire.

Takedown Bite (●●●●): At your character's command, his dog may inflict a Drop Prone or Hold grappling maneuver on a target if it hits with a successful bite attack. The target may be no more the double the dog's Size, however. This immediately initiates a grapple. Dogs may employ the above maneuvers along with Break Free, Control (opponent's) Weapon, and Damage.

Kino Mutai (Style; ● to ●●●●)

Prerequisites: Dexterity ●●, Resolve ●●●, Brawl ●●

Style Tags: Enraged, Street

Effect: Your character learns to bite opponents, tear at soft tissues and gouge eyes with special skills. This is sometimes called "Kino Mutai" in Filipino martial arts, but it can be learned by anyone uninhibited enough to use these unconventional methods to the greatest extent possible for humans. Thus, this Fighting Style only works for beings with a human body plan and a decent set of teeth.

Trained Bite (●): If your character prevails in a grapple she may bite harder than normal, targeting sensitive parts of an opponent's anatomy. This acts as the Damage maneuver, but inflicts an additional two points of bashing damage. Vampires, werewolves in humanoid form, and other monsters with particularly potent bite attacks cause one additional damage of the same type (potentially lethal) when using this maneuver.

Ripping (●●): Your character overcomes squeamishness and distractions to grab and tear earlobes, eyelids, and other soft, loose parts. She doesn't pause before ripping out hair by the scalp. None of these injuries are life-threatening, but they inflict pain. If you win a grappling roll with more successes than the opponent's Resolve, she may use the Ripping maneuver, which inflicts an appropriate Tilt like Blinded or Deafened but only inflicts one point of bashing damage.

Trained Gouge (●●●): While grappling, your character can drive her fingers into an enemy's eyes with exceptional force and persistence. If you win a grappling roll and score at least three successes, you may opt for the Gouge maneuver. This inflicts the Blinded Tilt, but unlike typical cases your character maintains this Tilt until the opponent Breaks Free, Restrains your character, or renders the arm unable to function.

Continuous Bite (●●●●): Your character knows how to apply pressure, rip flesh, and use the rest of her body's musculature to enhance a bite. In a grapple, she may inflict lethal damage with the Damage maneuver by tearing off strips of her opponent's flesh.

Light Weapons (Style; ● to ●●●●)

Prerequisites: Wits ●● or Fighting Finesse, Dexterity ●●●, Athletics ●●, Weaponry ●●

Style Tags: Light Melee

Effect: Your character is trained with small hand-to-hand weapons which favor finesse over raw power. These maneuvers may only be used with one-handed weapons with a damage rating of two or less.

Rapidity (●): Your character moves with swiftness to find just the right spot to strike. You can sacrifice your character's weapon damage rating to add his Weaponry score to his Initiative for the turn. The weapon becomes a zero damage weapon for the turn.

Thrust (●●): Your character knows when to defend himself, and when to move in for the kill. At any time, you can sacrifice points of Defense one-for-one to add to attack pools. This cannot happen if you've already used Defense in the same turn. If you use this maneuver, you may not sacrifice your full Defense for any other reason. For example, you cannot use Thrust with an all-out attack.

Feint (●●●): With a flourish in one direction, your character can distract an opponent for a cleaner, more effective follow-up strike. For example, if Feinting with a two damage weapon with three successes, the attack causes no damage. However, your next attack ignores five points of Defense, and causes three extra points of damage.

Flurry (●●●●): Your character moves quickly enough to stab opponents with numerous pricks and swipes in the blink of an eye. As long as your character has his Defense available to him (if it's not been sacrificed for another maneuver, or denied from surprise, for example), any character coming into his immediate proximity takes one point of lethal damage. This damage continues once per turn as long as the enemy stays within range, and occurs on the enemy's turn. This can affect multiple opponents, and cannot be used in a turn where the character is Dodging.

Vital Shot (●●●●●): Your character can use his smaller weapon to get into an opponent's defenses and hit where it hurts most. Sacrifice your character's Defense for the turn to use this maneuver. If the attack roll succeeds, the attack causes one point of aggravated damage, in addition to the damage rating of the weapon.

Marksmanship (Style; ● to ●●●●)

Prerequisites: Composure ●●●, Resolve ●●●, Firearms ●●

Style Tags: Pistol, Rifle

Effect: When prepared and aimed, a gun is an ideal killing machine. Your character has trained to take advantage of the greatest features of a gun, usually a rifle, but this Style can be used with any gun. Because of the discipline and patience required for Marksmanship, your character cannot use her Defense during any turn in which she uses one of these maneuvers. These maneuvers may only be used after aiming for at least one turn.

Through the Crosshairs (●): Your character is a competent sniper, able to sit in position and steel her wits. Usually, the maximum bonus from aiming is three dice. With Through the Crosshairs, it's equal to her Composure + Firearms.

Precision Shot (●●): With this level of training, your character knows how to effectively disable a victim instead of focusing on the kill. When attacking a specified target, you may reduce your weapon's damage rating one-for-one to ignore penalties for shooting a specified target. For example, if your character is using a sniper rifle (four damage weapon), and attacking an arm (-2 to hit), you could choose to use three damage for -1, or two damage to eliminate the penalty entirely.

A Shot Rings Out (•••): A master sniper, your character has no worries or lack of confidence. She can fire into a crowd and strike a specific target without penalty. If she misses, it's because her shot goes wide. She will never hit an unintended target.

Ghost (••••): Your character has trained to shoot unseen, and vanish without a trace. Her Firearms score acts as a penalty on any roll to notice her vantage point, or any Investigation or Perception roll to investigate the area from where she was shooting.

Martial Arts (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Resolve •••, Dexterity ••, Athletics ••, Brawl ••

Style Tags: Striking

Effect: Your character is trained in one or more formal martial arts styles. This may have come from a personal mentor, a dojo, or a self-defense class. It may have been for exercise, protection, show, or tradition. These maneuvers may only be used unarmed, or with weapons capable of using the Brawl Skill, such as a punch dagger, or a weapon using the Shiv Merit.

Focused Attack (•): Your character has trained extensively in striking specific parts of an opponent's body. Reduce penalties for hitting specific targets by one.

Additionally, you may ignore one point of armor on any opponent.

Leg Kick (•): Your character knows how to kick an opponent's legs out from under him. She might use a Thai-style round kick or drive her heel into his kneecap. If she reduces her Defense by 1 while concentrating on low kicks, she'll cause the Leg Wrack Tilt if her Brawl attack inflicts at least one damage that turn. She doesn't suffer the usual penalty for targeting a leg. Note that trying to hit the other leg for a knockdown doesn't use this maneuver, but the normal rules. However, using Leg Kick on subsequent attacks lengthens the duration of the Leg Wrack by attaching the Tilt to additional damage.

Cutting Elbow (••): When striking with an elbow, your character targets thin skin in the opponent's scalp with the aim of ripping it open. She only suffers a -2 penalty to attack when she wishes to inflict the Blinded Condition on an opponent with human-like anatomy because when she hits and inflicts at least one point of bashing damage, blood from the scalp wound washes over the opponent's eyes. This maneuver may also be purchased through the Tactics (Street) Style Tag.

Defensive Strike (••): Your character excels in defending herself while finding the best time to strike. You can add 1 or 2 points to your character's Defense. For each Defense point you take, subtract a die from any attacks you make. This can only be used in a turn in which your character intends to attack. It cannot be used with a Dodge.

Trapping (•••): This maneuver has a lot of names, including "sticking hands" or "scissors." Using it, your character knows how to control her opponent's limbs so they can't be used to block incoming strikes. By making limb-to-limb physical contact, she can sense and counter her opponent's reactions. If she hits with a Brawl attack, she may set aside as many successes as her Brawl Skill and add these to her Brawl attack next turn. If she sets aside all successes, the first attack inflicts no damage, but makes contact for the follow up. She loses this advantage if the opponent leaves hand-to-hand range and she can't or won't follow.

Whirlwind Strike (•••): When engaged, your character becomes a storm of threatening kicks and punches; nothing close is safe. As long as your character has her Defense available to her, and is not Dodging, any character coming into arm's reach takes one bashing damage. This damage continues once per turn as long as the enemy stays within range, and occurs on the enemy's turn. If you spend a point of Willpower, this damage becomes two bashing until your next turn.

Inch Force (••••): Your character knows how to swiftly strike across extremely short distances. She can hit hard with an inch of movement, or smash with a shoulder, hip, or head butt. When an opponent tries to grab your character she's entitled to one immediate counterattack per turn as an additional reflexive action (multiple grab attempts during the turn don't entitle her to additional counterattacks). Roll Strength + Brawl - Defense as usual. If the attack scores more successes than the opponent's Strength, she automatically breaks free of the grab and inflicts standard Brawl damage as well.

The Hand as Weapon (••••): With this degree of training, your character's limbs are hardened to cause massive trauma. Her unarmed strikes cause lethal damage.

High Momentum Strike (•••••): Tornado kicks, spinning backfists, and flying knees are hard to pull off, but in the right circumstances can be devastating. If your character has a higher Initiative rank, she may wait for an opponent to attack with a Brawl or Weaponry strike. If the opponent scores 0 successes, your character may attempt an immediate counterattack, using her action for the turn on a leaping and/or spinning attack. If the counterattack hits it knocks the opponent down. In addition, roll the character's Brawl dots and add it to the attack's total damage.

The Touch of Death (•••••): Your character's mastery has brought with it the daunting power of causing lethal injury with a touch. If she chooses, her unarmed strikes count as weapons with two damage rating.

Mounted Combat (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Athletics ••, Animal Ken ••

Style Tags: Archery, Heavy Melee, Light Melee, Tactical (Police)

Effect: Your character fights from horseback using the animal's size and maneuverability to make her attacks more effective. While trained cavalry regiments are largely a thing of the past, many police departments around the world still have officers who use techniques like these in the modern day.

Steady Saddle (•): Your character knows how to position herself in the saddle to attack an opponent without risking being dismounted or hurting her horse. Your character gains a +3 bonus to any rolls for staying mounted during combat.

Fixed Charge (••): Your character and her horse charge headlong at her opponent. She gains the benefits from both charging (though you move up to twice your horse's Speed rather than your character's) and an all-out attack. Both she and her horse lose Defense for the rest of the turn.

Skirmishing (•••): Your character's attacks are designed to harass her opponents, moving in range to strike and then out again before the counterattack. Her horse can travel half its Speed before her attack and the rest after as one move. She suffers a -2 penalty to her attack for the turn but both her and her mount gain +2 to Defense.

Rearing Beast (••••): Your character has trained her horse to be an intimidating and dangerous opponent in the thick of combat. Instead of attacking, roll Wits + Animal Ken and add successes to attack rolls made by her horse.

Parkour (• to •••••, Style)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Athletics ••

Style Tags: Movement (Agile)

Your character is a trained and proficient free runner. Free running is the art of moving fluidly through urban environments with complex leaps, bounds, running tricks, and vaults. This is the type of sport popularized in modern action films, where characters are unhindered by fences, walls, construction equipment, cars, or anything else the city puts in their way.

Flow (•): Your character reacts instinctively to any obstacles with leaps, jumps, and scaling techniques. When in a foot chase, subtract your Parkour from the successes needed to pursue or evade. Also, ignore environmental penalties to Athletics rolls equal to your Parkour rating.

Cat Leap (••): Your character falls with outstanding grace. When using a Dexterity + Athletics roll to mitigate damage from falling, your character gains one automatic success. Additionally, add your Parkour rating to the threshold of damage that can be removed through this roll. Parkour will not mitigate damage from a terminal velocity fall.

Wall Run (•••): When climbing, your character can run upward for some distance before having to traditionally climb. Without rolling, your character scales 10 feet + five feet per dot of Athletics as an instant action, rather than the normal 10 feet.

Expert Traceur (••••): Parkour has become second nature for your character. By spending a Willpower point, you may designate one Athletics roll to run, jump, or climb as a rote action (reroll all failed dice once). On any turn during which you use this ability, you may not apply your character's Defense to oncoming attacks.

Freeflow (•••••): Your character's Parkour is now muscle memory. She can move without thinking, in a Zenlike state. The character must successfully meditate in order to establish Freeflow. Once established, your character is capable of taking Athletics actions reflexively once per turn. By spending a point of Willpower on an Athletics roll in a foot chase, gain three successes instead of three dice.

Phalanx Fighter (••)

Prerequisites: Weapon and Shield ••, Spear and Bayonet •

Effect: Your character is trained to wield a spear alongside a shield. She does not increase her spear's Strength requirement for using it one-handed as long as she's also using a shield. She can use a spear for any Weapon and Shield maneuvers.

Police Tactics (Style; • to •••)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••, Weaponry •

Style Tags: Tactics (Police)

Effect: Your character is trained in restraint techniques, often used by law enforcement officers. This may reflect formal training, or lessons from a skilled practitioner.

Compliance Hold (•): Gain a +2 bonus to overpowering rolls to disarm or immobilize an opponent.

Weapon Retention (••): Opponents attempting to disarm your character or turn his weapon against him must exceed your character's Weaponry score in successes.

Speed Cuff (•••): Against an immobilized opponent, your character may apply handcuffs, cable ties, or similar restraints as a reflexive action.

Powered Projectile (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Athletics ••, Firearms ••

Style Tags: Pistol

Effect: Your character is comfortable using premodern ranged weapons like crossbows, slingshots, and blowguns. Though long ago replaced by firearms, these weapons remain popular for hunting and are widely available in some countries.

Quick Reload (•): Your character has trained herself on the steps to reload her weapon to the point it's ingrained in her muscle memory. She reloads one turn faster than normal (to a minimum of a reflexive action).

Intercept Shot (••): Your character can shoot a projectile out of the air with her own. This maneuver is not capable of stopping bullets, though it could be used to deflect a grenade if you're feeling lucky. Any turn your character spends aiming she can make an attack against a thrown object with a -2 penalty (in addition to the normal penalties for attacking a small object). A successful hit deflects it a number of meters (or yards) equal to damage in a random direction.

Penetration (•••): Your character knows how to best exploit the weaknesses in a target's armor. She can add +2 to her weapon's armor piercing rating for her next attack.

Drawback: This shot requires intense concentration. Your character loses her Defense any turn she uses this maneuver.

Skewer (••••): Your character uses her projectiles to impale parts of an opponent's anatomy. When attacking a specified target, reduce the penalty by -2, and any inflicted Tilts require the victim to roll Stamina + Strength - damage inflicted to remove a projectile before it's resolved.

Punch Drunk (••)

Prerequisite: Willpower •••••+

Effect: Your character's resolve is unwavering, even when suffering wounds, broken limbs, and lost blood. She can fight on past the point that her body demands she quit. When she suffers bashing or lethal damage that would remove her last Health box, you may spend a point of Willpower to keep the last box, and instead upgrade damage in her other Health boxes. This Merit has no effect on aggravated damage.

Quick Draw (•)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, a Specialty in the weapon or fighting style chosen

Effect: Choose a Specialty in Weaponry or Firearms when you purchase this Merit. Your character has trained in that weapon or style enough that pulling the weapon is his first reflex. Drawing or holstering that weapon is considered a reflexive action, and can be done any time his Defense applies.

Retain Weapon (••)

Prerequisites: Wits ••, Brawl ••

Style Tags: Light Weapon, Pistol, Tactical (Police, Military)

Effect: Your character has trained to resist being disarmed. Police and military forces often teach this, but your character might learn this as part of a traditional martial art, as part of a shooting course, or as a member of a private security service. When an attacker attempts to use the Control Weapon or Disarm grappling maneuvers to take his weapon, or otherwise take it away in combat, reduce successes by your character's Brawl dots.

Retribution (Style; • to •••••)

Effect: Your character isn't necessarily a practiced, learned fighter, but when she sees injustice, she gets a mean streak like nothing else. To use these abilities, your character must suffer or witness harm to someone she cares about or feels responsibility toward. This doesn't have to happen in the same scene, but she must be actively pursuing retribution or the effects end. With loved ones whose lives were in true danger, she does not need to directly witness the harm — she simply has to be made aware of it.

Note that this Merit doesn't draw a "right and wrong" distinction with what your character must witness or suffer to use these abilities — villains can be just as vindictive as heroes. Also note that these abilities aren't all for direct combat; with Storyteller discretion, any act of retribution is valid.

Unerring Pursuit (•): Your character tracks and finds assailants with the ferocity of a predatory animal. Add +2 to all rolls to track or pursue assailants. Add +2 to her Speed as well.

And Taking Names (••): Your character's fueled not just by muscle and adrenaline, but by righteous indignation. When making an all-out attack don't add +2 to her roll. Instead, add +1 damage (if she's attacking unarmed, her attack counts as a weapon). If an effect would add dice to her normal all-out attack bonus, add +1 damage for every two dice, rounded down. Outside of direct combat actions, damaging effects like traps, explosives, or car crashes she causes cause an additional 2 damage.

Fight Through (•••): Your character is unstoppable in pursuit of justice. She gains Armor 2/0.

Eye for an Eye (**):** Your character's vengeance has taken on a level of dramatic appropriateness. This requires the avenged source of harm to have caused a Condition or Tilt. The first time your character damages her target, apply that Condition or Tilt. If multiple Conditions or Tilts existed, choose which to apply. This will not replicate purely supernatural effects, unless your character can reproduce them.

Guns Blazing (**):** Your character is able to swallow all fear and apprehension when enacting vengeance. She can take the benefits of all-out attacks each turn while maintaining her Defense (or allowing her to use it on other effects). She could, theoretically, go all-out "twice," sacrificing her Defense for +4 instead of +2. Also, this can be used with the effects of And Taking Names.

Notes: If your character's Burden is Vengeful, any rolls to use Retribution abilities benefit from the 8-again quality.

Roadkill (**)

Prerequisites: Aggressive Driving **

Style Tags: Tactical (Street)

Effect: Your character has a knack for running down living creatures with her vehicle. When using with a vehicle to hit a human-sized target she adds two additional successes per 20 miles per hour (32 kilometers per hour) her vehicle is moving instead of one. She also inflicts the Knocked Down Tilt on her target even if she misses.

Shiv (• or **)

Prerequisites: Street Fighting **, Weaponry •

Effect: Your character carries small, concealable weapons for use in a tussle. Rolls to detect the concealed weapon suffer your character's Weaponry score as a penalty. With the one-dot version, he can conceal a weapon with a zero damage rating. The two-dot version can conceal a one damage rating weapon. Your character may use the Brawl Skill to use this weapon.

Spear and Bayonet (Style; • to ***)

Prerequisites: Strength ***, Dexterity **, Weaponry **

Style Tags: Pole Weapons

Effect: Your character is trained with long weapons that end in a point. This could be anything from a traditional spear to a fixed bayonet on a modern rifle. This Style has countless variations around the world but is historically incorporated as part of military training.

Firm Footing (•): Your character braces herself with her weapon to skewer a charging opponent. Any opponent attempting an all-out or charge attack against your character takes her weapon's damage automatically before he makes his attack roll. Armor subtracts from this, but then will not apply to any attacks your character makes in the same turn.

Keep at Bay ():** Your character can threaten an opponent with her weapon to prevent maneuvering. Choose an opponent with a shorter weapon; if that opponent takes any action other than backing away or Dodging he loses his Defense against your character's next attack.

Drawback: Spend a point of Willpower to activate this maneuver.

Strike and Develop (*):** Your character stabs an opponent with her weapon then turns the blade before removing it, leaving a more grisly wound. Attacks made with her weapon that inflict lethal damage causes the victim to bleed out, causing one point of lethal damage for a number of turns equal to her successes on the attack roll. Subsequent attacks can add to the total number of turns but never cause more than one point of lethal damage per turn in bleeding to the victim. She loses her Defense any turn she uses this maneuver.

Staff Fighting (Style; • to ****)

Prerequisites: Strength **, Dexterity ***, Weaponry **

Style Tags: Pole Weapons

Effect: Your character uses a staff as her weapon of choice. These maneuvers are usually performed with a quarterstaff or bo staff, but anything of a suitable length and shape like a walking stick or a heavy curtain rod will work as well.

Short Grip (•): Your character moves her grip to the end of the staff, maximizing reach but losing speed. She gains a +1 to attack at the cost of her staff's +1 bonus to Defense. You can change your character's grip once per turn reflexively before taking an action.

Thwack Weapon ():** Your character slaps away an opponent's weapon with the tip of her staff. She can Disarm with a roll of Strength + Weaponry contested by an opponent's Strength + Athletics. If successful, the opponent drops his weapon at his feet. On an exceptional success, your character knocks the weapon a number of meters (or yards) away equal to her successes rolled.

Vaulting Defense ():** Your character knows how to use her staff to rapidly reposition herself in a fight. Spend a point of Willpower; your character can add her dots in Weaponry to her Defense against one attack per turn.

Tornado Strike (**):** Your character spins her staff rapidly in a circle, hitting opponents all around her. She treats her staff attack as an autofire medium burst against up to three targets of her choice within range.

Street Fighting (Style; • to ****)

Prerequisites: Stamina ***, Composure ***, Brawl **, Streetwise **

Style Tags: Tactics (Street)

Effect: Your character learned to fight on the mean streets. She may have had some degree of formal training, but the methodology came from the real world, in dangerous circumstances. Street Fighting isn't about form and grace, it's about staying alive. These maneuvers may only be used unarmed, or with weapons capable of using the Brawl Skill, such as punch daggers, or weapons concealed with the Shiv Merit.

Duck and Weave (•): Your character has been beaten all to hell more than a few times. Now she dodges on instinct, not on skill. You can reflexively take a one-die penalty to any actions this turn to use the higher of her Wits or Dexterity to calculate Defense. If you've already made a roll without penalty this turn, you cannot use Duck and Weave.

Knocking the Wind Out ():** Shots to the center mass can shake an opponent, and your character knows this well. When your character makes a successful unarmed attack, the opponent suffers a -1 to his next roll.

Kick 'Em While They're Down (*):** The best enemy is one on the ground. Your character topples opponents, and keeps them down. Any time your successes on an attack roll exceed an opponent's Stamina, you may choose to apply the Knocked Down Tilt (p. 285). Additionally, any time your character is close enough to strike when an opponent attempts to get up from a prone position, she can reflexively cause two bashing damage.

One-Two Punch (**):** Your character hits fast, and she follows through with every hit. Whenever she makes a successful attack, you can spend a point of Willpower to cause two extra points of bashing damage.

Last-Ditch Effort (**):** In a street fight, every second could mean the loss of your life. A proficient street fighter is a remarkable survivalist. She bites, headbutts, trips, or does whatever it takes to prevent that last hit. Any time a character with this level of Street Fighting is about to take a hit or get overpowered when she's already suffering wound penalties, she can reflexively spend a Willpower point and sacrifice her Defense for the turn to make an attack against her would-be assailant. This can occur even if she's already acted in a turn, so long as she's not already spent Willpower. Resolve this attack before the opponent's action.

Strength Performance (Style; • to **)**

Prerequisites: Strength ***, Stamina **, Athletics **

Style Tag: Movement (Strong)

Effect: While the Strength Attribute covers all forms of issuing bodily force, your character has specifically trained in lifting, pushing, and pulling enormous weights. He learned this as an Olympic-style weightlifter, strongman competitor, or performer. This doesn't help your character hit things, but if he does, anything at the other end is going to break and hurt. In addition to learning maneuvers, at *** dots your character can actually increase in Size after adding prodigious amounts of muscle. You may purchase the Giant Merit for your character during play, or if he began play as Small-Framed, get back the Experience value of those Merit dots while increasing to Size 5, and losing its benefits. (Your character can't do one after the other — there's a limit to what her skeleton can support.) Your character must have had Strength Performance *** for at least one year, and you must tell the Storyteller your character is trying to get bigger. No character can move from Giant to Size 7 this way, and any Size change is optional — small people can still max out in this style.

Strength Tricks (•): Your character combines trained strength with a practical knowledge of physics to perform impressive, if minor, feats of strength. He can rip phone books in half, bend rebar, and smash bricks with his bare hands. The character benefits from a +2 bonus to Performance and Intimidation rolls where he can demonstrate his talents, and an additional +1 to other non-combat feats of Strength.

Lifting ():** Your character can perform incredible feats of raw strength. When attempting a feat of strength that requires a Strength + Stamina roll, you gain the Rote benefit — re-roll failed dice. This does not aid running, jumping, or combat rolls, but does aid in attempts to damage relatively immobile, inanimate objects. In that case your character gains the Rote benefit on a combat dice pool no larger than his Strength + Stamina.

Push/Pull ():** Have you ever seen someone pull a tractor trailer or airplane with their teeth? Your character's all over that. If your character's goal is to move an object laterally, double her effective Strength. If the object is on wheels or friction has otherwise been minimized, multiply her Strength by 5. Practical considerations may require equipment such as ropes and a harness, and the quality of this equipment may provide a bonus to the roll.

Stronger Than You (*):** If your character succeeds at Strength-based tasks, he does so with an increased level of performance. You don't gain bonus dice for Strength-related rolls but if you roll at least one success, add +1 success to the total. This does apply to combat, making this character capable of bone-cracking blows and grips.

Subduing Strikes (•)

Prerequisite: Weaponry **

Effect: Your character is practiced at striking enemies in a way that leaves them breathing, even when using otherwise deadly force. When pulling her blows with a weapon, she can deal bashing damage instead of lethal without spending Willpower.

Systema (Style; • to **)

Prerequisites: Dexterity ***, Athletics ***, Wits **

Style Tags: Movement (Agility), Tactical (Military)

Effect: Your character learns to move with exceptional suppleness, rolling with blows and obstacles. She redirects incoming force not as a technique, but an instinct. These abilities are often taught within Systema, a Russian martial art developed for intelligence services and special operations. It can also reflect the advanced body skills taught by "soft" martial arts such as Tai Chi or Aikido.

Rolling (•): When knocked prone, your character relaxes, tucks, and rolls with the momentum. She easily spins to face any direction she wishes. She doesn't suffer that usual -2 penalty to attacks while Knocked Down or otherwise prone. If she suffers any damage for falling or impacting against an unyielding surface like the hood of a car, roll her Dexterity; each success removes one point of bashing damage (this is not effective against sources of lethal damage — you can't roll with impalement). She benefits from this in addition to any other action she might take to mitigate damage.

Balance ():** Your character instinctively aligns her posture and bends with incoming force to keep her balance. Attempts to inflict the Knocked Down Tilt or Drop Prone grappling maneuver must achieve two additional successes.

Combat Posture ():** Your character's posture and sensitivity are strong enough to knock down anyone who tests his balance against yours. Your character's Brawl and Weaponry attacks inflict the Knocked Down Tilt whenever they score successes that equal or exceed the victim's Strength. If an attack would have already delivered this result (such as with a weapon that inflicts the Knockdown effect) it does so with particular force, inflicting an additional point of damage.

Thrown Weapons (Style; • to **)

Prerequisites: Dexterity ***, Athletics **, Quick Draw with a thrown weapon Specialty •

Style Tags: Light Melee, Agile

Effect: Knives, darts, throwing stars, and tomahawks are all weapons your character can send flying in her enemy's direction. Many warrior cultures have used thrown projectiles in wartime or for hunting purposes and may teach this Style. Also, similar techniques are found among circus and sideshow acts. These maneuvers may only be performed with edged weapons Size 1 or smaller.

Practiced Toss (•): Your character knows how to throw her weapon with a quick and fluid motion. Add her Athletics score to Initiative when using a thrown weapon.

Impalement Arts ():** A well-placed throw staples an opponent's limbs to the environment. If your character succeeds in damaging a specified target arm, leg, or hand with a thrown weapon, she inflicts the Impaled Tilt.

Drawback: The heft needed to make her throw penetrate leaves your character vulnerable. She loses her Defense any turn she uses this maneuver.

Transfer Maneuver (Same Cost as Original Maneuver; see below)

Prerequisites: Intelligence **, Wits **. Your character must also possess at least ** dots in both the original and new Skill that the maneuver applies to.

Style Tag: Special; see below.

Effect: Many styles teach unarmed methods as a prerequisite for armed methods, and vice versa. This maneuver allows your character to transfer a maneuver from a Brawl-based Fighting Style to a Weaponry-based Style, or vice versa. The maneuver must not depend on the physical presence of a weapon, in that it can be applied with empty hands. The Storyteller decides which maneuvers are appropriate, though this can only be used on maneuvers worth no more than ** dots — after that, they're too specific to the original fighting method. Your character must know the maneuver in its original form, and you must purchase it again, at the same cost in dots and Experience.

Trunk Squeeze (••)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••

Style Tags: Creature (Constrictor), Grappling

Effect: By wrapping arms or legs around an opponent's torso, your character can practically crush the life out of him. While grappling, your character can use the Trunk Squeeze maneuver.

• **Trunk Squeeze:** Using a bear hug or leg scissors, your character crushes the opponent's torso, making it increasingly difficult to breathe. This maneuver inflicts one point of bashing damage and imposes a cumulative –1 to the opponent's grappling rolls for each round she maintains it. The penalty persists until after your character attempts another maneuver, or until the target Breaks Free. This maneuver doesn't work on anyone who doesn't need to breathe, or victims with a Size at least 2 higher than the attacker's.

Two Weapon Fighting (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, Fighting Finesse ••, Weaponry •••

Style Tags: Flexible, Light Melee

Effect: Your character fights with a weapon in each hand. She can amplify her attacks by using them together or balance between attack and defense by using one weapon for each. Different martial arts focus on different sets of weapons. Some employ a rapier and dagger, or a katana and wakizashi, while others use sticks or two light swords. This Style can be used to replicate any of them. Unless your character possesses the Ambidextrous Merit she takes the usual –2 penalty for using a weapon in her off-hand. Neither weapon can be above Size 2 for performing these maneuvers.

Balanced Grip (•): Your character knows how to use her weapons so they're not awkward to hold. Your character does not count her weapons' Initiative penalties as long as her off-hand weapon's rating is the same or the lower of the two.

Protective Striking (••): Your character uses her off-hand weapon to deflect attacks. She adds her off-hand weapon's bonus to her Defense for the first attack made against her in a turn. If her off-hand weapon has no bonus then add +1 instead.

Dual Swipe (•••): Your character attacks with both of her weapons simultaneously against one target. As part of an all-out melee attack, add her off-hand weapon's bonus to her attack roll and reduce her target's Defense by 1. If her off-hand weapon has no bonus then add +1 instead.

Double Strike (••••): Your character attacks two different targets simultaneously. Spend a point of Willpower and designate two targets in close range of your character. Take the highest Defense and –1 to the dice pool. Choose which weapon's damage applies to which target. This maneuver cannot be used with Dual Swipe.

For example, if you're up against two opponents with 4 and 6 Defense, and you have a 2L and 1L weapon, you would take –7 to Double Strike (the 6 Defense, with an additional –1). If you rolled three successes, one opponent would take five points of lethal damage, and the other four points of lethal damage — your choice which.

Unarmed Defense (Style; • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Brawl ••, Defensive Combat: Brawl

Style Tags: Striking

Your character is better at stopping people from hurting them than they are at hurting other people. Maybe they practice a martial art that redirects an opponent's blows, or are just very good at not being where their opponent wants them to be.

Like a Book (•): Your character can read his opponents, knowing where they're likely to strike. When facing an unarmed opponent and not Dodging, increase your character's Defense by half of his Brawl (round down).

Studied Style (••): Your character focuses on reading one opponent, avoiding his attacks and frustrating him. Attacks from that opponent do not reduce your character's Defense. If your character's Defense reduces his opponent's attack pool to zero, his further attacks against you lose the 10-again quality.

Redirect (•••): When your character is being attacked by multiple opponents, he can direct their blows against one another. When he Dodges, if his Defense roll reduces an attack's successes to zero, his attacker rolls the same attack against another attacker of your choice.

Drawback: Your character may only redirect one attack in a turn. He cannot redirect an attack against the same attacker.

Joint Strike (••••): Your character waits until the last possible second, then lashes out at his opponent's elbow or wrist as he attacks, hoping to cripple his limbs. Roll Strength + Brawl instead of Defense. If you score more successes than your attacker, you deal one point of bashing damage per extra success, and inflict either the Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack Tilt (your choice).

Drawback: Spend a point of Willpower to use this maneuver.

Like the Breeze (•••••): Your character steps to one side as his opponent attacks, and gives her enough of a push to send her flying past him. When dodging, if your Defense roll reduces an opponent's attack successes to zero, you can inflict the Knocked Down Tilt.

Drawback: Declare that you're using this maneuver at the start of the turn before taking any other attacks.

Weapon and Shield (Style; • to ••••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Stamina •••, Weaponry ••

Style Tags: Light Melee

Effect: Your character knows how to fight from behind a shield with a one-handed weapon. These maneuvers strike a balance between protection and offense and are used in tandem with others, such as in a Viking shield wall or riot police formation.

Shield Bash (•): Your character slams her shield into an oncoming opponent, disrupting his attack. When Dodging add her shield's Size to her pool. If she reduces an opponent's attack successes to 0 then any additional successes inflict bashing damage.

Boar's Snout (••): Your character throws everything into a forward charge, trusting in her shield to protect her. Using a weapon and shield, your character can all-out attack and retain her shield's Size bonus to Defense for the turn. If this maneuver is used the same turn by other allies with shields, then add an additional +1 to Defense for each.

Pin Weapon (•••): Your character uses her shield to trap an opponent's weapon. If an opponent misses a melee attack against your character he is automatically disarmed.

Tortoise Shell (••••): Your character knows how to position herself so that she's completely protected by her shield. When using a shield she is considered behind cover with Durability equal to the shield's size plus one for each shield-wielding ally in her immediate vicinity.